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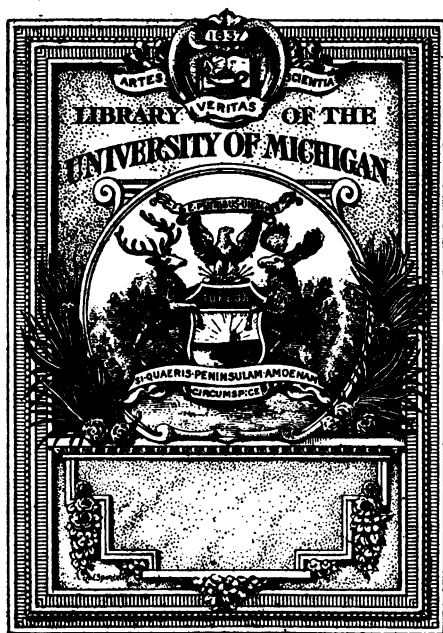
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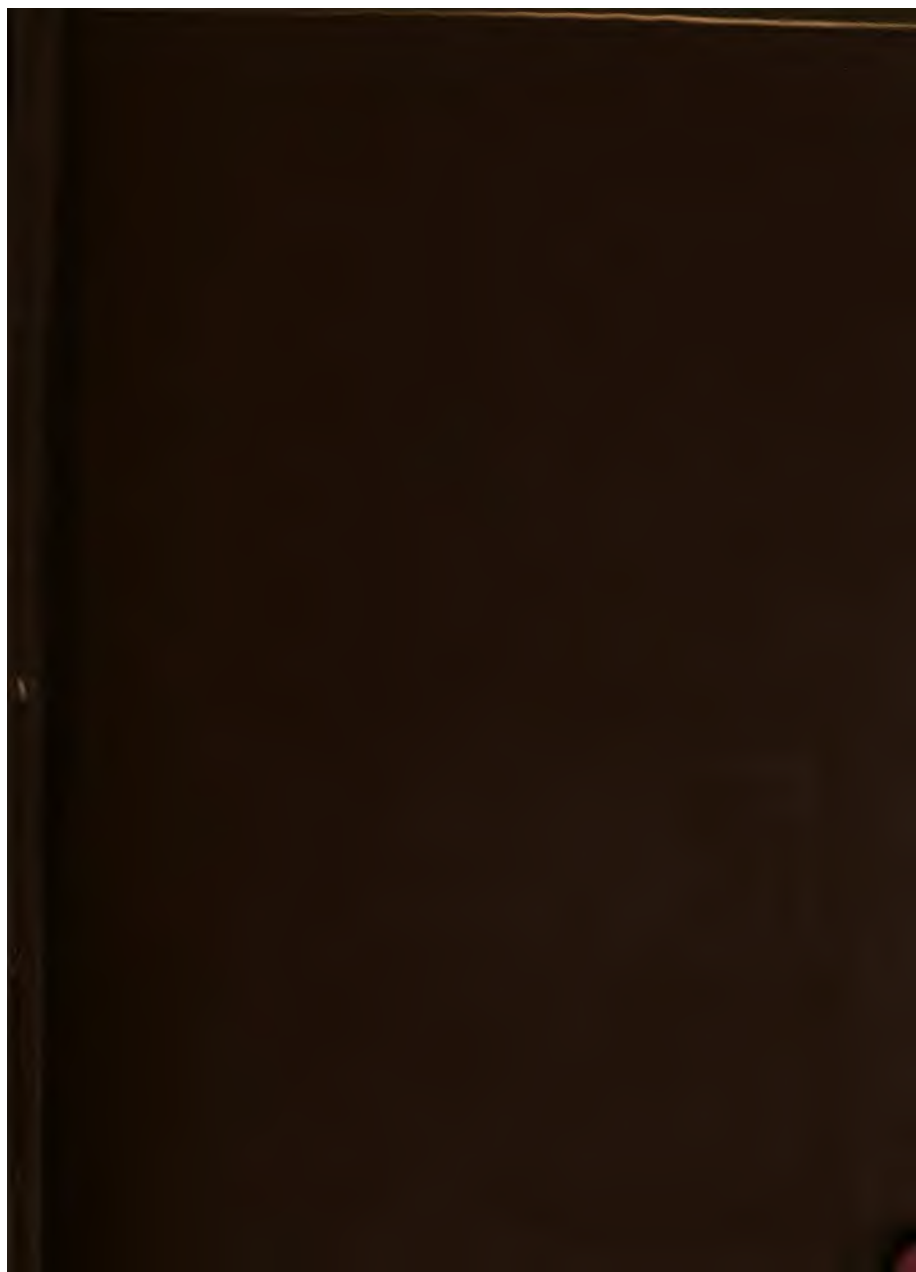
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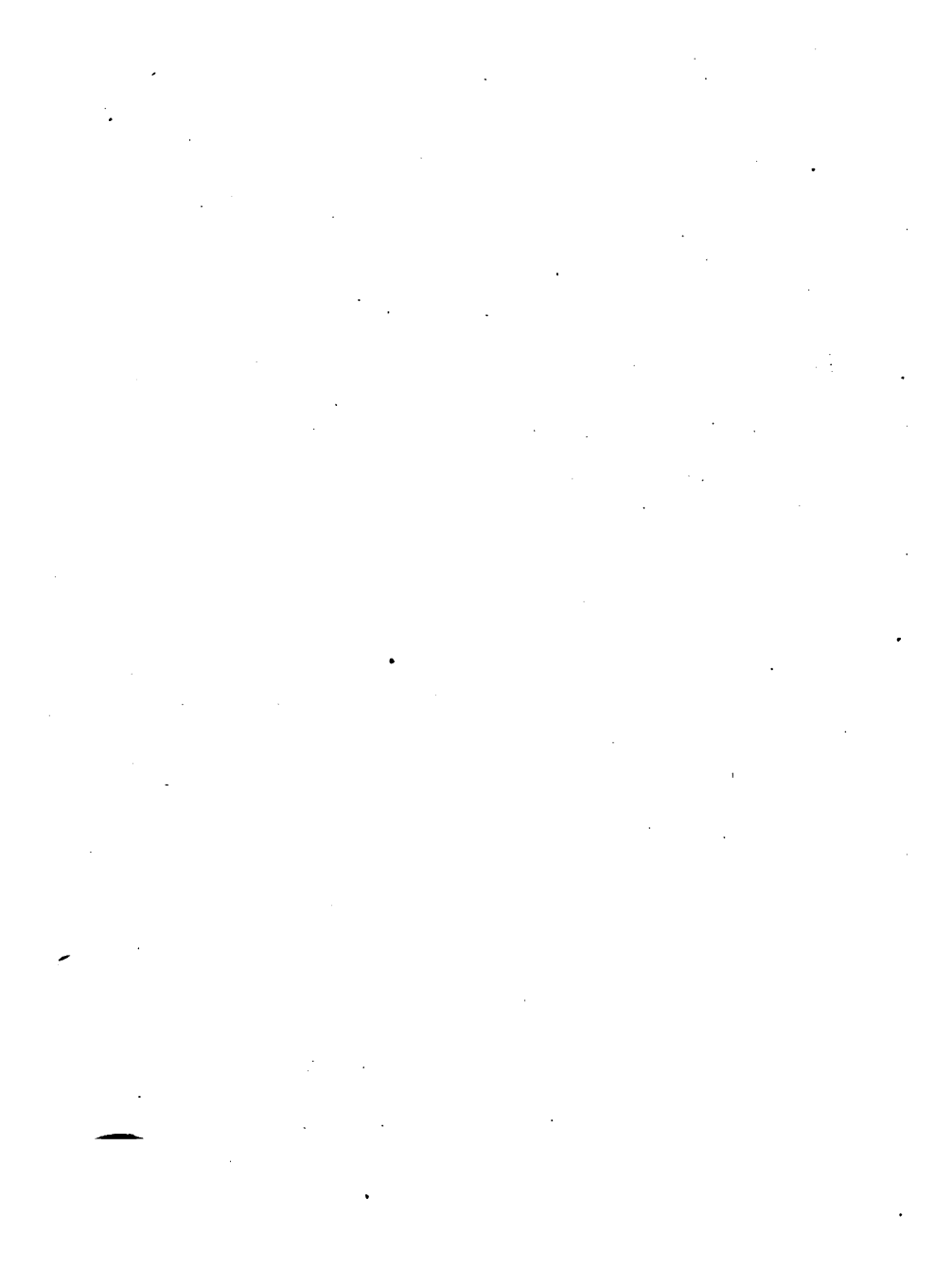
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828
W75,

THE PARADOX

AND

OTHER POEMS

BY

John
ALBERT WILSON

*"He is the freeman whom the truth makes free;
And all are slaves beside."*

NEW YORK
G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
182 FIFTH AVENUE
1877

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BY

J. ALBERT WILSON.

recd. O 3-27-41

To

MY ESTEEMED FRIENDS,

Mr. and Mrs. John H. Sand,

IN MEMORY OF THE MANY PLEASANT HOURS WE HAVE SPENT
TOGETHER DISCUSSING THE

GREAT PROBLEM OF EXISTENCE,

THIS LITTLE GARLAND OF POETIC THOUGHT, GLEANED FROM THE LEAFY
HEDGE-ROWS AND MOSSY NOOKS WHICH SKIRT THE PATHWAY OF

LIFE,

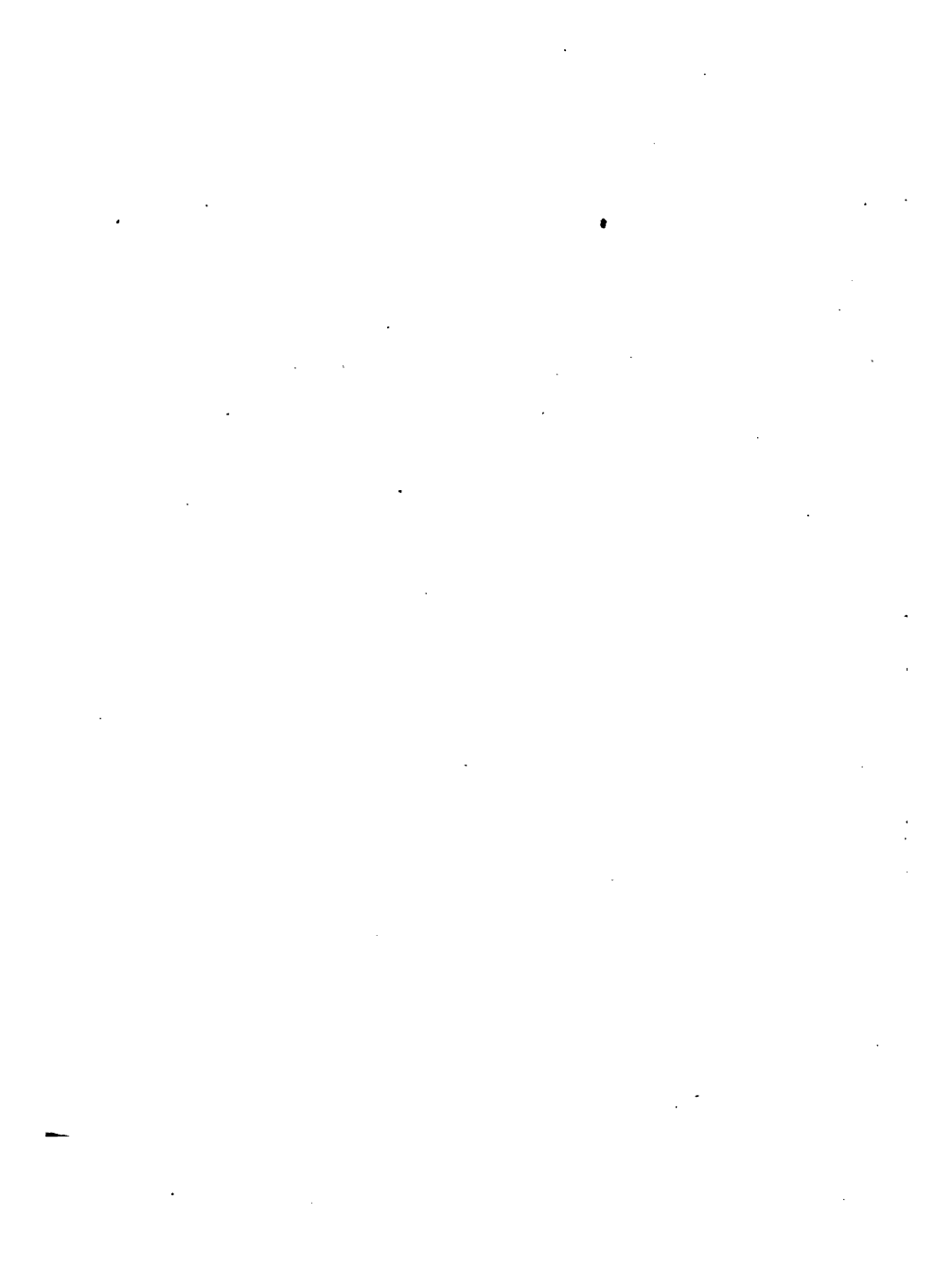
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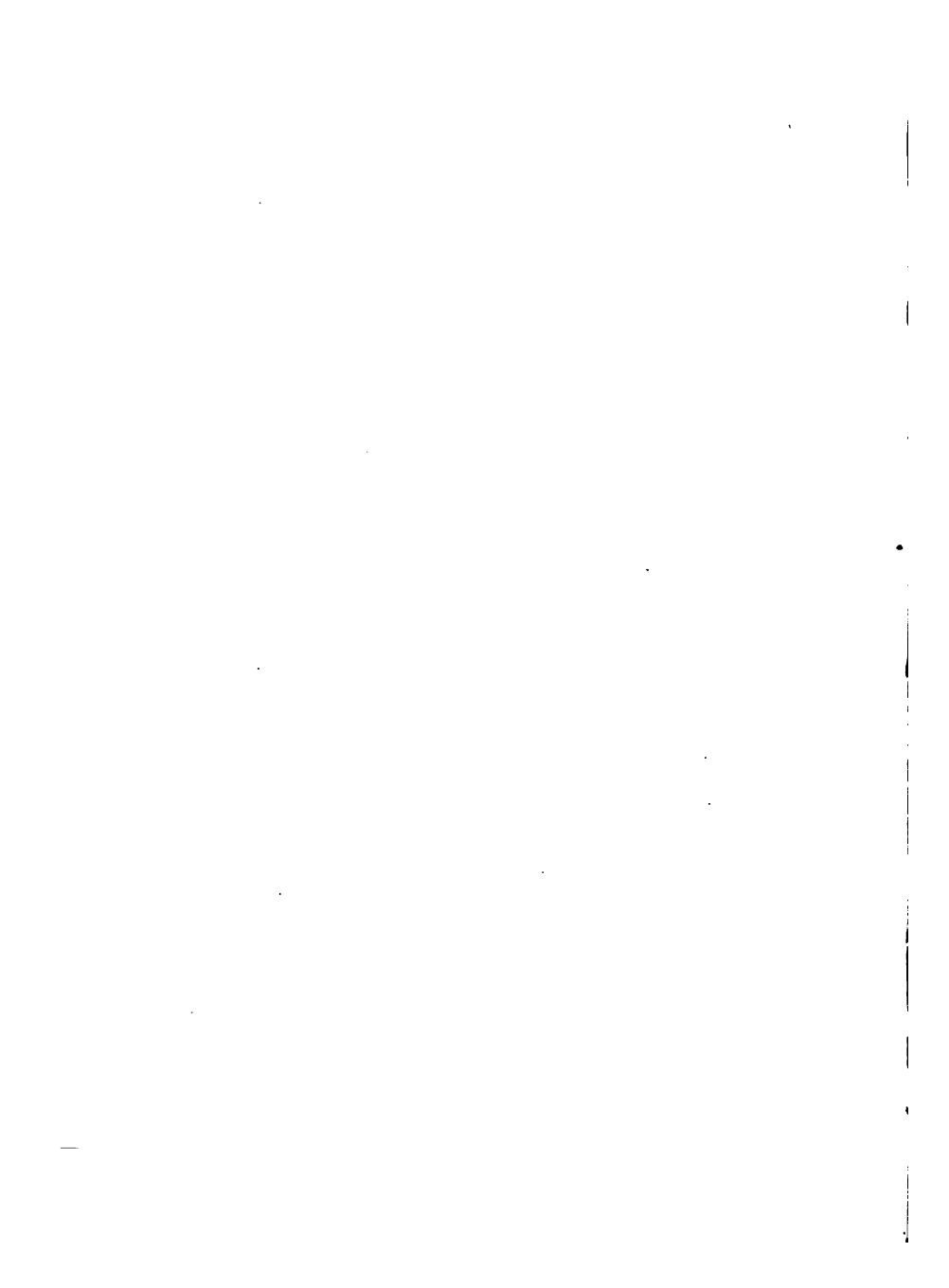
Albany, N. Y., Dec. 1, 1877.

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PREFACE.

THE author begs to present herewith to the indulgent reader a trifling posy of wild flowers, gathered by the wayside of thought. If, upon inspection, their colors be found less fair, or their perfumes less fragrant, than those of their more favored companions reared in the gay parterre, he has yet no apology to offer; for these claim naught, save as untutored blossoms, springing spontaneously from the free soil of an honest heart.



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THE PARADOX.

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THE PARADOX.

I.

WHEN whisp'ring zephyrs woo the pine,
And wake to life the blushing Spring ;
When droops the trailing eglantine,
And plovers pipe, and linnets sing ;

When cloy'd with sweets the drowsy bee
Forgets the roses in his way ;
When robins build in ev'ry tree,
And swallows weave their web of play ;

When glow the fruit trees wrapt in bloom,
And modest daisies bend their eyes ;
When lilacs yield their sweet perfume,
As incense to the blushing skies ;

When shining glow-worms haste to light
Their lanterns, in the dewy eve ;
When artful spiders through the night,
With care their spangl'd meshes weave ;

When crickets chirp on ev'ry hearth,
And sparrows twitter in the eaves ;
When wanton squirrels, in their mirth,
Play hide and seek amid the leaves ;

All nature, thrill'd with happy life,
This truth proclaims, through field and flood,
And Reason bids the heart believe—
A GOD THERE IS, AND HE IS GOOD !

II.

I question not, in anxious mood,
What hap the morrow may betide ;
If God there be, and He is good,
I know enough for ev'ry need.

I cavil not o'er jarring creed,
Nor vex with fears my weary brain ;
Enough—I know that ev'ry seed,
Doth yield an ear of golden grain.

I know not when the sand may run,
Which calls my spirit from the earth ;
I know but this—that never sun
Did set, but gave the morrow birth.

I seek not death, nor do I shun
The buffet of his venom'd dart ;
'Tis nature's law, that ev'ry son
Of earth—with life must surely part.

I fear not, in the realms above,
To meet my own, and Nature's Lord ;
His justice, mercy, kindly love
All nature publishes abroad.

And yet at times dark doubts arise,
Like clouds, my feeble faith to pale ;
And anguish toss'd, my spirit tries
In vain, to pierce the misty veil.

III.

If God there be, and God is good,
Why leave his creatures in suspense ?
Why screen himself from sight, and brood
Behind eternal silences ?

If God there be, and God is just,
And He the First Almighty Cause ;
Why thrive the wicked, while to dust
The good are ground by nature's laws ?

If God there be, as pure, as just,
As holy as befits a God,
How brook injustice, sensual lust,
And rapine through creation broad ?

If God there be, and God is love,
Why then do mortals suffer ill ?
How brooks He, from His throne above,
To see His earthquakes maim and kill ?

If God there be, a God of truth,
A God all-merciful, and kind ;
Why rack the flesh with pain, with ruth
And fear, oppress the tortured mind ?

If God there be, and He All-wise,
All-seeing, and Omnipotent ;
Why then creation's mysteries,
Upon imperfect beings spent ?

IV.

Yet is He silent ? Viewless He ?
Or are we not ourselves in fault ?
Who knows, but Him we daily see ?
Who knows, by Him are daily taught ?

We grope 'midst nature's mysteries,
Spreads mountain, meadow, lake and stream ;
Gray ocean's waste around us lies,
Above us worlds unnumber'd gleam.

The kindly sun illumines the day,
The silver moon pours forth her light ;
The gentle stars, with glist'ning ray,
Dispel the gather'd shades of night.

All nature teems with life ! but why
That life exists, or if by chance,
Or deep design, or whence, we lie
And grope in Reason's ignorance.

What boots it, if by science taught,
'Tis proved, that out of lower forms
Mankind evolv'd ? This goes for naught
Toward silencing the soul's alarms.

Where hies the soul ? This mystery
To solve, each mind is anxious bent ;
In turn each solves it, but the clay
Breaks not its silence eloquent.

v.

O Sun ! In thy diurnal round,
Obeying nature's primal laws ;
Say ! mark'd thou trace, or heard'st thou sound,
Of Him ! The First Almighty Cause ?

O Moon ! whose placid silver rays
Still gild the forehead of the night :
Say ! heard'st thou aught through nature's maze
Of Him who said—" Let there be light " ?

Ye Stars ! who watch with myriad eyes,
Throughout creation's broad expanse ;
Know ye the God ? His mysteries,
Do they unfold beneath your glance ?

O Earth ! abode of suff'ring man,
In all thy wealth of field, or flood ;
Throughout creation's outmost span,
May we by searching, find out God ?

The silent Sun set bathed in light ;
The speechless Moon her passage sped ;
Nor Sun by day, nor Moon by night,
Gave sign, nor any answer made.

I mark'd the myriad Stars arise,
But speechless their fix'd gaze was bent ;
And all creation's mysteries,
Lay wrapt in silence eloquent !

VI.

All nature teems with life ! The air
Throbs pregnant, with its countless brood ;
And million fishes quit their lair
To throng the palpitating flood.

Yet not a tithe of fervent life
Discloses to the tardy eye ;
Amaz'd—we find with instinct rife
Creation's whole immensity !

This world is countless worlds in one !
Each leaf supports a million trees ;
In ev'ry blade, an ample farm
Well stock'd with herds, some creature sees.

A speck, beneath a magic lens,
Becomes a country fair and vast :
Within a drop, the tutor'd sense
Reveals a million lives at least.

In every morsel that I eat,
In every draught which slakes my thirst ;
Some patriot wails a nation's fate,
Some monarch mourns an empire lost.

If we, with faulty human sense,
Have made some progress toward the light ;
What beauties must Omnipotence,
Disclose unto celestial sight !

VII.

All nature teems with life ! Alas !
Imperfect life ! Her tender charge,
By some sad lesion frequent pass
Distorted, from her sounding forge.

Not always, propp'd against the sky
At sunset, looms the giant pine ;
At times he mocks the critic's eye
With stunted trunk and gnarled limb.

Not always, in the higher forms
Of instinct life doth Nature trace,
With skilful pencil, glowing warm,
Proportion'd lineaments of grace.

I lately viewed a human birth,
Unhuman in its monstrous form ;
A loathsome thing, scarce fit for earth,
And yet of healthful parents born.

It fed and slept, it sometimes spoke,
But feebly, as a soul confin'd ;
A far-off voice, which dreamy broke
The silence, and oppress'd the mind.

What was this creature ? Was a soul
Entomb'd within that ghastly cage ?
A mind immortal, in that hell
To pine, and waste its noble rage ?

VIII.

All nature teems with life ! But why
Comes death to mar with cruel pain ?
Why born to life, if born to die ?
Why give—then ask the boon again ?

The sky is gray with myriads
Of restless, blithe ephemera ;
Who spring to life in countless clouds,
And live but for a single day.

'Twould seem a part of Nature's plan,
That life by life should constant fall ;
Some creatures prey on lordly man,
But man, presumptuous, preys on all.

'Tis plain all creatures fear to die,
Yet none may 'scape the fatal yoke ;
Nor strength, nor speed, nor beauty's sigh,
Avails to ward death's dreaded stroke.

Of life—death makes a common end :
In man and beast, in field and flood,
Life constant dies ; and dying, tends
To furnish living life with food.

Since death be part of Nature's plan,
And Nature rules by God's decree ;
'Twere impious for the creature man
To question death's expediency.

IX.

I watch'd a mother bend above
Her infant, as he smiling slept ;
Her maiden pledge of wedded love,
He sleeping smiled, she smiling wept.

But tears of joy ! I gaz'd again,
His sleep seem'd troubl'd, and his breath
Came short and quick, as though in pain ;
One gasp ! He slept the sleep of death.

And she, who lately sought to span
The future, and forecast the years
When he, her joy, estate of man
Should reach, wept now despairing tears.

I mark'd a lover, as he walk'd
Beside his love, 'neath forest trees ;
Nor dream'd of death, but blith'ly talk'd
Of future fame, and wedded ease.

And even as he spake, there came
A flash ! a shock ! a cry of fear !
A million lights ! a ball of flame !
Then dark his eye, and deaf his ear !

And stricken by that blast he fell
And lay in death ! His plighted troth
Annull'd ! His fame—a funeral knell !
His bridal bed—six feet of earth !

X.

The bells salute the bridal morn,
The bride awakes, her maids prepare
The wedding garments, and anon,
She stands—the orange in her hair.

She stands before the altar ; he,
Her love, beside her ; and the heart
And voice of each, vows constancy
For life ! Till death the twain shall part.

Anon, around the festive board,
They mingle with the merry rout ;
The bride is pledg'd, her smiling lord
Responds,—at last the guests pass out

And they alone are left. The sun
At morning rose upon them twain ;
He sets,—but now the twain are one,
For life ! To share its joys and pain.

He clasps her to his heart, and first
Salutes her by the name of " wife ! "
Why pales he ? Why his spirit's burst
Of agony ? What sudden strife

Of anguish thrills her brow ? while pale
As marble, sets her features' play
All cold and fix'd ! Her pulses fail !
One gasp ! He holds but lifeless clay !

XI.

I loved my friend, and firmly knit,
Our souls stood like twin ivies twin'd ;
The thought of each, was instant writ,
By each, upon the other's mind.

No common love, our common soul
Enwrapp'd, but still without pretence
Or fraud, each paid to each the whole
Of love, from out his inmost sense.

He pined and sicken'd. By his bed
Of pain I watchful vigils kept :
I nursed him, bathed his fever'd head,
Or gently fann'd him as he slept.

His kindly eyes respond with love ;
His lips repay my watchful care ;
No hand but mine his couch shall move ;
No hand but mine his draught prepare.

Anon a change. His fever'd mind
Grows restless. In his troubl'd sleep
He feebly moans. Alas ! My friend
Lies cold in death ! I lonely weep.

A further change. Death's magic wand
Distorts his features ! Strangely moved,
I start ! I shrink ! I fearful stand !
And loathe the form I lately loved !

XII.

All life moves on as in a dream ;
Scarce know I that my friend lies dead
Where tapers shed a ghastly gleam
Upon a white sepulchral bed.

The fire-light pales. With fitful moan,
Without, the tempests wildly rave ;
And thrills the awful monotone
Of Ocean's vast and dreamy wave.

The hour draws near the noon of night ;
Dim spectres haunt each echoing hall ;
The embers die ; the taper's light
Is quench'd. Grim darkness covers all !

Now nameless horrors seize my soul !
In vain I strive with labor'd breath
To move ! to shriek ! while on me roll
The nightmare terrors born of death !

At last my palsied voice I gain :
A light is brought ; the shades are sped ;
The spectres fly ! I stand again
Alone—beside the silent dead !

Beside my friend ! Yet dread to raise
The mantle, and behold that face
Which oft in far-off happy days
Lay press'd to mine, in fond embrace.

XIII.

A gloomy grave ; a leaden sky ;
A silent throng ; a white-hair'd priest ;
A prayer ; a drowsy homily ;
Then—" Earth to earth, and dust to dust ! "

A solemn pause ; a sullen sound ;
A hollow murmur, low at first ;
Now louder,—spades plied quickly round,
Heap—" Earth to earth, and dust to dust ! "

Th' whisp'ring crowds anon disperse ;
The priest drones on of " faith and trust ; "
I hear alone his far-off voice
Say—" Earth to earth, and dust to dust ! "

At eve, I watch the garden gate,
And vainly list his well-known tread ;
I murmur that he stays so late,
They tell me—that my friend is dead !

I seek him in his custom'd place,
And sadly haunt his silent room :
He comes not ; sends nor word, nor trace,
To light my soul's despairing gloom.

Where hies the soul ? This mystery
To solve, each mind is anxious bent ;
In turn each solves it, but the clay
Breaks not its silence eloquent.

XIV.

God bless thee for that sturdy thought,
O Tennyson ! which boldly reads,—
“ There lives more faith in honest doubt,
Believe me, than in half the creeds.”

Yet some unhesitating damn
The doubter, for his honest doubt ;
Consign him to eternal flame,
And from *their* heaven shut him out.

The broken threads of early faith
To join, they trouble not the least ;
Yet boldly threat unending death ;
“ 'Tis writ—and he who doubts is lost.”

No burning ray of hidden thought
Thy revelation brings to me ;
In vision—if *thou* sawest aught,
'Tis thine alone,—*I* did not see.

Because thou sayest—"He hath writ
This message,"—shall I base my faith
Upon thy word? My reason split
On shifting sands of mortals' truth?

Dare not to scoff at Reason's guard,
Thou impious wretch! Lest He who gave
That Reason, claim His blest award,
And send thee driv'ling to the grave.

XV.

Thou bigot, arrogant and blind,
Who seekest, on Damastes' bed,
To stretch by force the shrinking mind,
Or quell by force the rising head!

Who, in thy bigotry and pride,
Consignest to the lowest hell
The man who walks by Reason's guide,
And scoffing, nam'st him—"Infidel!"

How darest thou, blind worm of earth,
To pass upon thy brother clod?
Take back the insult to thy teeth,
Thou "Infidel" to Nature's God!

Thou madman, mouthing windy froth,
Curse on, with candle, book and bell;
Since I thy superstition loathe,
Am I become "an Infidel?"

Because, forsooth, I scan the page,
Of God's great love spread all abroad ;
Am I fit subject for His rage ?
Am I an " Infidel " to God ?

To certain things, an " Infidel "
I am,—thy foolish blasphemies
About a God who builds a Hell,
And loves the blood of sacrifice.

XVI.

Thou sayest " Love Divine hath writ
A message to the sons of men ;
A message, not of human wit,
But written with inspired pen."

I read here ghastly tragedies,
Which shock the soul of moral sense ;
Can I believe these blasphemies
Against Divine Omnipotence ?

Thou promis'd me a God of truth,
Thou bringest me a God of lies ;
A God of love, who loves forsooth
The mangled limbs of sacrifice.

A God of mercy, who in flames
Torments His puny worms of earth ;
A God of justice, who condemns
His creatures to eternal death.

Is this the God who loves to dwell
In smiling earth and beaming sky ?
This Nature's God ? Thou Infidel,
Great Nature scorns thy blasphemy !

I worship God ! A God of love,
Reveal'd in Nature's smiling page ;
Thou seek'st by sacrifice to move,
A demon of incarnate rage !

XVII.

Thou sayest—" He who doubts is lost,
For doubt leads on to unbelief ;
Then anguish wreck'd, by passion toss'd,
The hopeless wretch lies drown'd in grief."

I grant you, he who doubts is lost
To Hell's alarms ; for Reason's guard
Right quickly quells her gloomy host,
And bears their captive Heavenward.

Thou askest—" How can feeble sense
Unaided, show a God to be ?
Can man disclose Omnipotence ?
Or prove the truth of Deity ? "

He can. In ev'ry leaf I see
A witness to His tender care ;
He blossoms in the fruitful tree,
His whispers thrill the list'ning air.

His foot-prints flow in gentle rills,
His glances wake the morning ray ;
He sits upon the ev'ning hills,
And paints the steps of parting day.

He opens in the buds of Spring,
He smiles where Summer harvests glow ;
His peace the Autumn breezes bring,
His Winter wraps the earth in snow.

XVIII.

O brother of the feeble faith,
Who doubttest if a God there be ;
Who darest still the thought of death,
Lest death should last eternally.

Come, walk with me the leafy wood,
The sounding shore, scan ocean's waste ;
And read His love spread all abroad,
The boundless message of His grace.

Why fear to die ? There is no death,
But holy calm succeeding strife ;
A mist ! a thrill ! a deep-drawn breath !
Which wafts the soul to higher life.

The timid mind, so long enthrall'd
By superstition, sees in death
A monster shape,—and stands appall'd,
To watch the body cease to breathe.

But that which lately in thy sight,
A loathsome corpse repulsive lay ;
Was not thy friend, his spirit bright
Was soaring in eternal day.

The prison'd soul, with quicken'd eye,
Beheld the light, and anxious strove
To rend its prison-house, and fly
To meet the message of His love.

XIX.

Thou sayest, friend—"There is no God ;
From chance, result all Nature's laws ;
By chance evolv'd this earthly clod ;
And life evolv'd without a cause.

"There is no soul. The creature man,
But one in Nature's family,
Obeys maternal Nature's plan,
And lives to propagate and die.

"No life exists beyond the grave,
No punishment, no recompense.
This earthly life is all we have,
Our only joys—the joys of sense."

But friend ! If Nature works by laws
To form and populate the earth ;
There surely was a primal cause
To give those laws coherent birth.

If planets in fix'd orbits run,
And each his stated pathway find ;
If seasons change with changing sun,
There surely is a guiding mind.

It may be true, the creature man
Arose by gradual advance
To mental wealth ; but 'tis not plain
How order can result from chance.

XX.

I love those shadowy myths of eld,
Those echoes from old classic times ;
Ere Homer's matchless verses swell'd,
Or Pindar wrote his flowing rhymes.

When Chaos' womb gave triple birth
To Nature, Erebus, and Love ;
When sprang to life the heaving Earth,
The Sky, and last, almighty Jove.

When Titans waged their futile war
Against almighty Jove's decree ;
When brooded Pax, whilst Dread and Awe
Flank'd either side of Majesty.

When blest Minerva sprang to birth
Full-arm'd from out the head of Jove ;
When Atlas strode the trembling earth,
Or held the firmament above.

When first divine Prometheus wrought
His god-like task, with danger rife ;
And mounted on the walls of thought,
To seek the hidden springs of life.

When Tantalus, with mad desire
To test the gods' divinity ;
Young Pelops' flesh prepar'd with fire,
Nor felt a father's agony.

XXI.

I love these mystic tales, they teach
The progress of our human kind ;
They prove that man, the truth to reach,
Hath ever bent his anxious mind.

No futile, vain imaginings,
The Theogon of Hesiod ;
No empty lyric Pindar sings,
Nor forms of air were Homer's gods.

All teem with sentiment refined,
With gems by patient labor wrought ;
Each stands a monument of mind,
And shadows some gigantic thought.

By these, our future course we map,
The horoscope of Time we cast ;
We span the intervening gap,
And link the present to the past.

The thought which thrill'd that early day
Is echo'd in each bosom now ;
The theme of modern poet's lay,
Was sung by bards of long ago.

No planet beams with silver ray,
But then her gentle glances cast ;
No murmur wakes the air to-day,
But echoes in the dreamy past.

XXII.

When furrows mark the brow of Time ;
When million years have pass'd away ;
When he who wrote, or read this rhyme,
Alike is moulder'd into clay.

When broad Atlantic's billows rave
O'er towns where now mankind exist ;
When mild Pacific's currents lave
These fields with golden harvests blest.

When new-born continents arise
From out each ocean's shifting bed ;
When Summer zephyr softly sighs
O'er shining pearls, and corals red.

When Colorado's famous peak
Scarce lifts his head above the surge ;
When monsters sport, and sea-gulls shriek
Within Sahara's sandy verge.

When all that now exists is done,
In earth and air, in sea and sky ;
When all that is not, is begun,
Through Nature's vast immensity.

In far-off realms of perfect bliss,
Shall I keep Wisdom's gracious tryst ?
Or lost in senseless nothingness,
Forget that I did e'er exist ?

XXIII.

One common hope pervades each breast,
Doth vaunting Hope still boast a lie ?
Is dying man forever blest,
Or dies he to Eternity ?

Doth Death roll back the veil of life,
And entrance give to perfect bliss ?
Or brings he but an end to strife,
Eternity of nothingness ?

Whence springs our hope ? No special seed,
For all alike proclaim its spell ;
Nor faith, it forms the common creed
Of Christian, Jew and Infidel

The Arab feels it, as he guides
His camel through the shifting sand ;
The sailor, when by foaming tides
He shipwreck'd lies on hostile strand.

It nestles in the soldier's heart,
Shot through and through, it will not die ;
It rides upon the deadly dart,
And sings of immortality !

The Indian feels it, when he kills
His stallion for the fallen brave ;
One common hope each bosom thrills,—
“ There lives a life beyond the grave ! ”

XXIV.

O, brother ! If a God there be,
And Nature cries aloud there is ;
How can that God with dignity,
His work return to nothingness ?

Without volition came we forth,
Great Nature's greatest mystery ;
The body sprung from pregnant Earth,
The soul the breath of Deity !

The body sinks to earth again ;
'Tis well,—and matches Nature's plan ;
But is the spirit lost in Him
Who gave it life—a moment's span ?

If soul, the breath of Deity,
Remingle with His essences ;
Why then to nothingness we die,
For this annihilation is.

Yet can a soul begrim'd with sin,
Rejoin its native Deity ?
Can Virtue take corruption in,
And keep her vestal purity ?

The God who form'd a human soul,
Will from annihilation save ;
'Tis He who saith alike to all,—
“ There lives a life beyond the grave ! ”

XXV.

O Soul ! Thou shadow undefin'd !
Where dwellest thou, in head, or heart ?
Art thou identical with mind,
Or dost thou act from mind apart ?

Is soul reveal'd by depth of love,
Which broadly welcomes all his kind ;
An eye turned inward to reprove,
Yet to another's fault still blind ?

A lip which scorneth flattery,
Which dares be true, but fears to lie ;
A hand which tempers misery,
Yet vaunteth not its charity ?

A heart which seeketh after God,
Yet wastes no time on idle creed :
Which spends itself in deeds of good,
And minist'ring to others' need ?

A body chaste and undefil'd,
Meet temple for the living God ;
In ev'ry sin a little child,
A man full-grown in ev'ry good ?

If by these signs the soul we find,
And mind exists distinct from soul ;
Some men of subtle thought refin'd,
May have, I fear, no soul at all.

XXVI.

If mind and soul exist as one,
And each with each identical ;
The babe, whose race is but begun,
Possesses no immortal soul.

The idiot, gibbering to the wind,
Is but a beast in human form ;
The madman, having lost his mind,
Must share the future of the worm.

I knew a man of mental wealth,
Of culture, and of mind remov'd
From vulgar joys ; who, while in health,
Was widely known, and much belov'd.

The poor ne'er sought his door in vain ;
The widow found her wrong redress'd ;
He watched beside the bed of pain,
And by the orphan's voice was bless'd.

A foe to vice, but virtue's friend,
The harden'd sinner shunn'd his path ;
Yet would the penitent amend,
He tendered love, unmix'd with wrath.

One morn, when bent on deed of love,
His horse took fright, and rudely thrown,
He senseless lay ; while vainly strove
His friends to make their presence known.

XXVII.

He linger'd long 'twixt life and death ;
At last stern death his prey resign'd ;
Alas ! The blow which spared his breath,
O'eturned the balance of his mind.

He nothing knew of former life,
But feebly would he moan and rave ;
He lived for years. His fruitless strife
Is done. He fills an idiot's grave.

A maiden comely,—good as fair :
She loved, and thought her love return'd ;
The day arrives,—the guests repair
To find,—a trusting heart is spurned.

And he who sought her for his bride,
Then rudely snatch'd his promise back ;
He lived. She, broken-hearted died ;
She died—a raving maniac.

If mind and soul exist as one,
Two souls were lost without default ;
The good man naught by goodness won,
The maiden's truth was spent for naught.

We grope in Reason's ignorance,
And blindly stumble as we run ;
Yet seemeth it to feeble sense,
That mind and soul can scarce be one.

XXVIII.

If soul attain a higher sphere,
When future years unnumber'd roll ;
May not the mind its harvest bear,
As handmaid to the ruling soul ?

May not the mind, which gropes through time,
At last attain to know the whole :
And prove, when freed from earthly grime,
The chiefest attribute of soul ?

Throughout the earth we find that vice
Is fostered still by ignorance ;
The cultured mind e'er strives to rise,
And scorns the bestial joys of sense.

Not his, the truly cultured mind
Alone, who burns the midnight oil ;
The hodman's thought may be refined,
While bending at his daily toil.

Not always doth the sordid soul
Grow richer, as he gathers in
The coins of knowledge ; lower still,
They sometimes plunge him into sin.

Those souls who highest flights attain,
Do not alone for knowledge strive ;
Her gold they count but means to win
Fair Wisdom's fruit, by which they live.

XXIX.

The fleeting soul, by death releas'd
To life is quickly ushered in ;
No garment changed, she stands confess'd,
In virtue's garb, or robed in sin.

For life is but a school, where we
Still graduate to higher spheres ;
The term is for Eternity,
And Deity the task prepares.

As each forsakes this lower form,
So must he enter on the next ;
And they who care not here to learn,
Will surely there be sore perplex'd.

The rich there purchase no degree ;
Availeth neither place, nor blood ;
The pauper stands by royalty,
And each must prove his calling good.

Some souls, who strut in pride below,
May find that there they merit least :
And some, who here unnoticed go,
May there be classed amongst the best.

In time, we sow our future still ;
No moment ever speeds us by,
But bears a germ of good, or ill,
To blossom in Eternity.

XXX.

At times, vague shadows cross my mind,
And dimly their reflection cast ;
They bear an outline undefined,
And seem like echoes from the past.

A moment serves to spend their force ;
One flash, and they have passed from sight ;
As speeds an arrow on its course,
Or meteor, down the brow of night.

A touch, a glance, the voice of friend,
Will serve to wake my sleeping mind ;
'Tis vain,—the fickle shadows blend ;
They fly,—nor leave a trace behind.

They haunt me in the crowded street,
I find them in the silent wood :
They come when glows the noonday heat,
They in the softened twilights brood.

What are these phantoms of the mind,
But memories from childhood cast ?
Or are they glimmerings refined,
From out an undiscover'd past ?

If in the future, ne'er shall die
This soul, which now exists in me ;
May not a dead existence lie
Entombed in past Eternity ?

XXXI.

My dog comes bounding to my call ;
I speak, he seems the sense to guess ;
I fondle him,—now face and tail
Are eloquent with happiness.

He knows my footstep on the stair,
My trace along the crowded street :
For me alone, his watchful care,
No other may his welcome greet.

In sleep he now unconscious lies.
He dreams. Some nightmare shape appals.
The tears roll downward from his eyes ;
He starts,—he moans,—and feebly howls

He wakens when I speak his name,
Then sinks again to slumber sweet ;
Now face and tail alike proclaim
His dream with happiness replete.

'Twould seem that something kin to mind
Finds refuge in this gentle hound ;
Who knows, but here a soul confined
May wrestle with its narrow bound ?

The God who mapped creation's plan
Ne'er formed the humblest thing in vain ;
Will he preserve the creature man,
And leave all others to their pain ?

XXXII

O Poet of the kindly heart !
Who said'st,—“ Thou would'st not friendship own
With him, who in his selfish sport,
Would wanton crush the helpless worm.”

Of all thy writings multiform,
No word beams forth in purer rays ;
Thy plea for the poor trodden worm,
Hath crowned thy name with lasting grace.

The kindly man is kind to all ;
No creature lives beneath his care ;
Alike he hearkens ev'ry call,
And all alike his kindness share.

He questions not of need, or use ;
Enough—that they on earth exist ;
God's creatures all. Dare he abuse
The subjects of his Maker's trust ?

In wanton sport he takes no life,
God's sacred gift. His pressing need,
And that alone, must guide the knife
Which robs the creature of its meed.

Who mercy seeks from Deity,
Must mercy to His creatures show ;
He naught can claim, who wantonly
Abused that sacred trust below.

XXXIII.

I love the gentle Pantheist,
Who traces God in earth and sky ;
Who sees Him on the harvest rest,
And hears Him in the zephyr's sigh.

Who feels Him in the summer wind,
And marks Him stem the rising flood ;
Who listens to His voice refined,
Come swelling from the vocal wood.

Who notes His step upon the green,
Where blooms the modest violet ;
Who meets His glances in the beam,
When morning rays the meadows greet.

Who smells Him in the perfumed breath
Of flowers, on the ambient air ;
Or in the sweetly scented swath,
Which claims the mower's ready care.

Who breaks Him in his daily bread,
And drinks Him from the sparkling spring ;
Who feels Him in the embers red,
And knows the God in everything.

Who useth all without abuse,
But useth all things reverently ;
Who holds that naught may sin excuse,
Since all form part of Deity.

XXXIV.

What wond'rous instincts underlie
The life of so-called lower forms ;
In all that creep, or swim, or fly,
Through Nature's vast emporiums.

That egotist—vain, empty man,
Of all, the only helpless one ;
Adopting kindly Nature's plan,
Becomes a pupil to the worm.

These lower creatures quickly glean
Great Nature's task at single glance ;
But puny, helpless, pompous man
Stands crowned with pride and ignorance.

Thus crowned a king, vain empty fool,
He, only drone in Nature's hive ;
Proclaims that he was born to rule,
And seeks all others to enslave.

By honest labor, not content
To win his bread from day to day ;
He uses craft to supplement,
And scruples not to rob and slay.

In turn, he steals from each its art ;
He takes his victim's all by force ;
Then stabs his teacher to the heart,
And feasts upon the mangled corse.

XXXV.

I sometimes question if 'tis right
That man should live by shedding blood ;
That he should sate his appetite
By spreading death thro' field and flood.

I walk adown the crowded mart,
And view each semi-human form ;
Mark here a head, and there a heart,
Still throbbing thro' their pulses warm.

It may be, that no wrong is done,
I know not, yet it seems to me,
These carcases of flesh and bone
Make up a ghastly cemet'ry.

This eager crowd, who buy, and sell,
And hack the corpses lying nigh ;
Appear like fowl hyenas all,
Who feast on dead mortality.

I know that all through Nature's plan,
Life preys on life, and all succumb ;
Yet does this warrant thinking man
To turn his body to a tomb ?

If wrong there be, and sober sense
Can scarce assume that all is right ;
I fear a very weak defense
May prove—" transmitted appetite."

XXXVI.

What sorrows rack this suffering clay,
What anguish thrills the tortured brain ;
What agonies, from day to day,
Are crowded in life's little span.

The body, fouled by fell disease,
Infects the sympathizing mind ;
The mind, when lost its customed ease,
Upon the body wreaks the wound.

Unlike, distinct, yet nearly joined ;
So nearly that they still defy,
Their common meeting place to find,
All scientific scrutiny.

The sluggish body, bound by sense,
Nor asking larger destiny ;
The soul, with eagerness intense,
Forever struggling to be free.

Like some proud eagle, who was wont
To track the courses of the Sun ;
Entrapped, now vainly strives to mount,
And madly wrestles with his chain.

Thus hapless man, by dual birth,
Is doomed to two-fold misery ;
His body racked by pains of earth,
His soul with mental agony.

XXXVII.

One grand injustice ever thrills
All Nature with a sense of wrong ;
That Deity should visit still
The father's crime upon the son.

Yon puny creature, racked by pain,
Was not for his own sin accursed ;
His palsied limbs, and feeble brain,
Are sequels to his sire's lust.

Yon maiden of the hollow eye,
The racking cough, and aspect wan ;
Earned not the wrath of Deity,
She expiates a mother's sin.

Yon monster, whose distorted form
Scarce likeness bears to man, nor brute ;
Hath done no ill, he pays the wrong
Wrought by some ancestor remote.

Yon idiot, gibbering to the wind,
For wrath Divine ne'er furnished cause ;
His sire pawned his offspring's mind,
When he transgressed stern Nature's laws.

Can God—a God of Justice be,
Who lets the sinner 'scape His wrath ;
Yet vengeance wreaks eternally,
Upon these sinless ones of earth ?

XXXVIII.

By foul hereditary taint,
Not only is the body bound ;
The mind full often makes complaint,
And sighs her unprovoked wound.

That " Like begetteth like," we find
A constant law in Nature's plan ;
'Tis therefore meet that faults of mind
Should likewise pass from sire to son.

The murderer, whom we condemn
To death, may still be innocent ;
His father's bias toward the crime
Was with his inmost being blent.

The thief, who steals his daily bread,
May be an honest man in fact ;
The thievish impulse in his blood
Impels him to the thievish act.

The wanton, burning with desire,
In spirit may be pure and good ;
Her mother nursed the lustful fire
Which revels in the daughter's blood.

We, guided by blind human sense,
See but the act, and call it sin ;
But will Divine Omniscience,
Who sees the soul, that soul condemn ?

XXXIX.

'Tis written in Mosaic code,—
“ An eye for eye, a tooth for tooth ;
And whoso sheds his fellow's blood,
Shall be condemned to suffer death.”

Our modern Christianity
Adopts this law as come from God ;
But with strange inconsistency
Rejects the rest of Moses' code.

Thus, murder, we with murder pay ;
Why not ? The precept is of God !
If any question, we reply,—
“ 'Tis writ in the Mosaic code ! ”

For, if a valued life be lost
By murder foul, we loathe the deed ;
And, counting not the second cost,
We straightway cause the wretch to bleed.

The victim's orphans cry for bread ;
Some impious people therefore claim
The slayer should be doomed to tread
A daily round, that bread to win.

But then they cannot make pretense
That this suggestion comes from God ;
'Tis only simple common sense,
Not found in the Mosaic code.

XL.

O Earthly Justice ! Blind thou art !
Thy judgments—empty as the wind ;
Thou seeest not the human heart,
Thou knowest not the human mind !

Thy pomp, and pride, and panoply,
Scarce hide thy ignorance from view ;
Thy nerveless hand and sightless eye,
Still greet the false and spurn the true !

Thy path lies over bones of men,
Some guilty, many innocent ;
Yet still thy boastful tongue and pen,
Are of thy wisdom eloquent !

Thy wit were folly in a clown ;
Thy lore but fits a charlatan ;
Thy proof the scandal of the town ;
Thy judgment on a quibble turns !

Thy ermine sullied is with lies ;
Thy purple trims a harlot's crest ;
Thy scales, unbalanced, lean to vice ;
Thy sword is aimed at Virtue's breast !

Eternal Justice ! Here on earth,
A spectre bears thy sacred name ;
A mountebank, a monster birth,
A wanton wench of common fame !

XLI.

Immortal Pope ! Whose master mind
E'er scorned thy heritage of pain ;
And soaring high on thought refined,
Approved the ways of God to men !

Who, grappling with thy doubting faith,
At last attained to wisdom's height ;
And from the embattled walls of truth
Proclaimed, " Whatever is, is right."

Be thou my mentor and my guide ;
Infect me with thy inward peace ;
Teach me this truth, whate'er betide,
" Still virtue leads to happiness !"

Strengthen my weak and wav'ring faith ;
Instruct my feeble wings to rise ;
Engrave upon my heart the truth,
" Though man's a fool, yet God is wise !"

Teach me to know the God above ;
Teach me to work his will below ;
Teach me this subtle truth to prove—
“ True knowledge is ourselves to know.”

Impart to me thy eagle ken,
The calmness of thy balanced mind ;
Teach me to live in love with men,
And to the will of God resigned !

XLII.

“ Our Father ! Who in Heaven art,
Forever hallowed be Thy name ;
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done,
In Heaven, and on earth the same !

“ Give me my bread from day to day ;
Forgive the evil I have wrought ;
Teach me with love my foes to pay,
And cleanse from sin my inmost thought !

“ Protect me through the gloomy night ;
Enfold me in Thine arms of love ;
O guide my tott’ring steps aright,
And lead me to Thy home above ! ”

The tired eyelids downward creep ;
The weary limbs compose to rest ;
The drowsy head, enwrapped in sleep,
Lies pillowed on the mother’s breast.

The mischief-loving hands are stilled ;
The busy feet no longer rove ;
The sleeping face with peace is filled,
As conscious of a mother's love.

Fond memory backward wings her flight,
And turns the page of time, to see
A little child repeat at night
His prayer, before a mother's knee.

XLIII.

Eternal and unchanging One !
Whose being fills immensity ;
Who ever was ere time begun,
And will be to Eternity !

Whose kingdom boundless is as space,
Where shining worlds unnumbered roll ;
Whose presence knows no biding place,
Yet fills each atom of the whole !

To all diverse, yet still the same,
In ev'ry age, in ev'ry clime ;
Or Druid circles dot the plain,
Or bends the pilgrim at the shrine !

To all diverse, yet still the same,
By angels, and by men adored ;
Or Moslem calls on Allah's name,
Or Christians hail their risen Lord !

Forgive thy puny worm of earth,
His eager thirst for hidden truth ;
Which germinating at his birth,
Hath grown and strengthened with his youth.

Teach me to know Thee as Thou art,
Teach me to quell my skeptic mood ;
Engrave upon my doubting heart—
A GOD THERE IS, AND HE IS GOOD !

THE BRIDE OF THE SUN.

NOTE.

It is, I believe, a widespread opinion, among scientific men at least, both in the United States and elsewhere, that at some remote period of time a large portion, and quite possibly the whole, of the North American continent, was peopled by a highly civilized race, of whose history we know comparatively nothing, not even a definite tradition relating to their existence having come down to us.

This opinion is for the most part, I understand, founded upon numerous and continued discoveries of the remains of various articles of domestic use, implements of husbandry and of warfare, all pointing conclusively to a degree of civilization to which the wild North American Indian of to-day is an utter stranger. Nor does it seem reasonable to suppose that he once possessed these arts, and has lost them simply through disuse, without retaining even the slightest degree of knowledge in regard to them.

These indications of a prehistoric race upon the American continent go even further than I have yet stated, for we find that the iron, copper, and silver mines of the country had been worked before the known advent of Europeans upon this hemisphere; thus evidencing in those who worked them an acquaintance with the nature and use of metals certainly not to be ascribed to the Indian of history, armed only with his rude bow, and an arrow tipped with a sharp flint.

Furthermore, there must have been some knowledge of at least the elementary principles of art among this people, for upon the smooth surface of the rocks in Colorado, Arizona, and other states and territories of the west and southwest, are found to-day engraved outlines, (of evidently a very remote date,) of the forms of men, animals, trees, and other natural objects, showing in their execution no mean degree of skill.

Again, in various sections of the country we find large mounds, popularly called "Indian mounds," but which in many cases, when opened, are found to contain articles clearly not belonging to any

race of Indians with which we of the present day are familiar, or of which our forefathers are known to have had any knowledge. Even the primary intent of these mounds is still a matter of doubt, some claiming them to be of the nature of cairns, and used as burying-places for the dead; others, that they were fortifications for defence; and still others, that they are certainly the remains of great cities which for untold ages have crumbled to decay.

Without pausing to discuss the merits of these respective theories, or of either of them, it may be here mentioned as a fact, attested by numerous reliable travelers in that section, that upon the face of some of the most precipitous cliffs of Colorado and vicinity, stairways have at some remote period been laboriously cut, extending upward in many cases several hundred feet, and ending in caverns or recesses literally chiseled out of the solid rock, having apparently been prepared as places of refuge by a probably weaker, or at least non-combative race, from the intrusions of a warlike, and most likely more powerful foe.

I have said that no *definite* traditions, so far as is known, exist among the present Indians, of any prehistoric race answering to this (probably sometime existent) civilized people or peoples. There are, I believe, traditions current among several of the western tribes concerning such a people; but these are so vague and shadowy as to be of no real value toward elucidating the mystery which enfolds alike the origin, the subsequent history, and the ultimate fate of those of whom they assume to treat. In this respect the great continent of North America to-day is, and probably must ever remain, *terra incognita*.

If, then, the learned *savants* of the earth are wholly at a loss to solve this enigma and disperse the shadows which enwrap the past, may not Fancy, with at least some show of justice, seize upon that broad domain as hers by right? May she not, by the power of her enchantment, recall once more to life the long-forgotten dead; and having once taken possession of this hitherto unoccupied region, may she not assume to hold the same against all comers, until lawfully ousted in favor of the paramount right of well-established fact?

THE BRIDE OF THE SUN.

PRELUDE.

GLAD Spring-time crowns the earth with flowers ;
Bright Summer ripens the golden grain ;
Brown Autumn-leaves strew forest bowers,
Stern Winter locks the murmur'ing main.
But when the Spring-bud first had birth ;
When first grew ripe the golden grain ;
When Autumn-leaves first clad the earth,
Or Winter frosts first chill'd the main—
Who knows ?

The peasant plows the yielding sod ;
The sailor dares the roaring deep ;
The priest pays sacrifice to God ;
The maiden smiles, and widows weep.
But when the plow first pierced the sod,
But when the ship first spurned the deep ;
When first the nations called on God,
Or joy did smile, or sorrow weep,
Who knows ?

From broad Atlantic's pebbly coves,
From calm Pacific's measured flow ;
From Arctic wilds, from Southern groves,
There comes a voice of long ago.
But what the message it conveys ;
But whose the lips that gave it birth ;
Whose hand first cleared the forest's maze,
Whose foot first trod the smiling earth,
Who knows ?

By dark Missouri's murky flood,
On Mississippi's banks we trace,
In Northern granite, Southern sod,
The foot-prints of an unknown race.
But who they were, or whence they came,
But what their fate, or how, or when
They lived, their origin, their name,
All buried deep from mortal ken,
Who knows ?

On Colorado's dizzy height,
Their eyries pierced the Western sky ;
The Eastern plain proclaims their might,
And ruined towns unnumbered lie.
But who undaunted scaled the height,
A safer resting-place to gain ;
Or who with multitude and might
Built those vast cities of the plain,
Who knows ?

Enough, they lived ! Like us they felt
Ambition's spur, Hopes kindling pow'r.
They lived for Time ! Like us they dwelt
Not only on the passing hour.

 Their works proclaim their kindred mould,
 Like us, they sickness, sorrow bore ;
 Joyed, wept, strove, bartered, bought and
 sold,
 Sinn'd, feared, despaired, and died,—what
 more ?

God knows !

Where Mississippi's wealth of waters
Through the smiling valleys flow,
With untiring, ceaseless motion
Rolling downward to the ocean,
Dwelt a people, rich and mighty
Untold centuries ago.

Traced they back their generation
To the old Egyptian kings ;—
They were cultured, wealthy, noble,
Skilled in Art and Science, able
To protect themselves in war,
To maintain themselves in peace.
They had sculptors, poets, painters,
All the old Egyptian learning ;
They had palaces of marble,

They had battlements of stone ;
They had railroads, printing presses,
Steamboats, and suspension bridges,
And all other great improvements
Which *we* fondly call our own.

They had mines of gold and silver,
Lead and iron, tin and copper ;
They had navies on the ocean,
They had armies on the land ;
They had droves of swiftest horses,
They had flocks and herds uncounted,
They had multitudes of bondmen,
Subservient to command.

Their king was great and noble ;
Far-famed for might in battle ;
Far-famed for wit and wisdom,
And for clemency in peace ;
They had lords and they had nobles,
They had courts and learned judges,
And on all the nations round them
To levy tribute did not cease.
They had countless towns and cities ;
They had endless parks and gardens ;
Filled with bronze and marble statu'ry,
With plants and trees and flowers ;
They had galleries of paintings,
They had schools of metaphysics.

Where philosophers and scholars
Oft passed the morning hours.

Where the lordly Mississippi
Joins the Gulf of Mexico,
Rose a mountain, clad with forests,
Capped with endless snow.
Monarch of a mighty range,
Long since vanished from the sight ;
Victim to volcanic change,—
Swallowed by the earthquake's might
Untold centuries ago !

Here doth stand their Capital,
Trenched about and guarded well
By battlement and moat ;
Here their king and nobles dwell,—
Here treasury and arsenal
Are walled with stone, while clad in mail,
With sword and musket armed all,
Their watchmen pace without.

Perched upon the mountain's brow
Stands the temple of the Sun ;
Built of marble white as snow,
With roof of gold which casts a glow
Adown the valleys,—where the slow
And murm'ring brooklets run.

There the white-robed priests and vestals
Watch and tend the sacred fire ;—
Vowed to constant chastity,—
Pure and spotless must she be,—
Nor stain on her virginity,—
Who tempts the Sun-god's ire.

'Twas an Autumn eve ; the Sun
Sinking veiled his burnished crest,
Yet still loth to quit the scene,
Touched the clouds with beauteous colors,
Marking thus his place of rest ;—
Gold and crimson, silver, ruby,
Diamond, pearl, and emerald glistened
Round the gateways of the West.

'Twas the season which the red man
Loves to call his " Indian Summer ; "
When no harsh sound mars the music
Of the forest brook's low murmur ;
When the humming-bird and bee,
Singing, roam from flower to flower ;
When the squirrel blithely chattering
Gaily leaps from tree to tree ;
When the rabbit, homeward pattering,
Softly seeks her mossy bower.
When 'midst leafy flags and rushes
By the still lake, rests the deer ;

When the drumming of the partridge
Muffled booms upon the ear ;
When through purplish haze, the summits
Of the snow-capped hills keep ward ;
When the pine-trees on the inclines
Stand like sentinels on guard ;
When the stork in marshy meadows,
Wrapped in meditation, seems
Musing on the phantom shadows,
Settling o'er a land of dreams !

Out at sea, the glassy deep
Shadows back the varied sky,
The gulls on folded pinions sleep,
And hushed the stormy-petrel's cry ;
Now the calm moon rising slowly
Sheds a silv'ry flood of light,
And the bright stars bending lowly
Chase the gathering shades of night.

In a garden near the palace,
Leaning 'gainst a marble fountain ;
Toying with the perfumed water,—
Gazing upward to the mountain
And the temple on its height—
Half hidden by the shades of night ;
Wrapped in dreamy meditation,
Stood the monarch's lovely daughter—
Aimee,—beautiful and bright.

She was youthful, fair and tender,
Lithe and graceful, tall and slender ;
Hair of gold and eyes of azure,
Rose-bud mouth, with teeth of pearl ;
Voice whose music sham'd to silence
All the songsters of the wild-wood ;
Step so springing, light and airy
That she seemed some mountain fairy,
Or bright angel, pure and good.

Skilled was she in all the learning,
Art and science, wit, discerning
Thought, which graced the learned sages,
And adorned the lettered pages
Of the countless books and tomes,
Embellishing the halls and homes
Of this people, learned and noble,
Untold centuries ago.

Famed her beauty. Far to northward,
Where Aurora's rainbow colors
Gild ice-pinnacle and snow ;
Far to south where Oronoco
Smiles in beauty, and the stately
Amazonian waters flow.
Far to east where broad Atlantic
Rushes on with sullen roar ;
Far to west where mild Pacific
Smiling laps the verdant shore.

Statesmen, scholars, learned and noble,
Humbly sued the lady's hand ;
Kings paid homage to her beauty,
Princes waited her command :
Yet she scorned them in their power,
And still spurned them in their pride ;
Hurtled harmless shafts of Cupid,
Hapless—each fond lover sighed.

Now the maiden, musing, dreaming,
Watches still the marble temple,
From whose glistening roof of gold
The shades of night are backward roll'd
By the Day-god's latest beaming.

On the morrow she forsakes,
(Thus the oracles decide,)
Parents, lovers, friends and flowers,
Music, painting, books and bowers ;
Perfumed fountains, smiling lakes,
Whispering trees and silv'ry tide ;
Clad in virgin purity,
Vowed to life-long chastity,
There henceforth her home must be,
The Sun-god's princess bride.

• Slowly turning to the West,
Where the day's departing splendor
Lights and shadows, soft and tender,
Mark his passage into rest ;

Sang she in the twilight glow,
While the shadows hastened on,
Sad and sweet, and soft, and low,
The vestal's evening orison.

SONG.

Sinking slowly to thy rest,
Source of life and light and heat ;
Gilded clouds within the west,
Mark the passage of thy feet.
Hear the vow I make to thee,
Vow of constant chastity.

Waning low from mortal ken,
Still thine influence we feel ;
Summer glads the hearts of men,
Zephyrs soft, o'er valleys steal.
Hear the vow I make to thee,
Vow of constant chastity.

Far above the city's hum
Rests thy temple on the steep ;
There thy vestal maidens roam,
There thy priests their vigils keep.
Hear the vow I make to thee,
Vow of constant chastity.

There they tend the sacred fire,
Kindled by thy burning ray ;
Safeguard 'gainst thy dreaded ire,
Earnest of succeeding day.
 Hear the vow I make to thee,
 Vow of constant chastity.

Hear my vow, O God of might !
Hear ! O hear me ere thou go !
By the bright star's softened light,
Neath the pale moon's misty glow—
 Hear the vow I make to thee,
 Vow of constant chastity.

The maiden paused. A silence fell
O'er leafy bower and woody dell ;
While faded slowly from the sight,
The last faint beams of Western light.
No sound doth break the stillness, save
The rippling of the fountain wave ;
The cooing of the turtle-dove
Within the leafy orange grove ;
The cricket's chirp, the night-hawk's call,
The hum of distant waterfall.

But hark ! from out the orange grove,
Where cooing turtles whisper love,

A sound to maiden sweeter far,—
The tinkling of a light guitar :
Whilst words of love, so sweet and clear,
Salute the lady's list'ning ear.

SONG.

Maiden, thou art pure and bright,
Thou art lovely to the sight—
Thou hast wisdom, wit and wealth,
Thou hast youth, and thou hast health.
Wherefore, lady, should'st thou be
Lost to love, and lost to me ?
Maiden hear ! O hear me now !
Ere too late retract thy vow !

Wherefore, maiden, should'st remain
Immured amongst the vestal train ?
Wherefore tend the sacred fire ?
Or appease the Day-god's ire ?
Wherefore, lady, should'st thou be
Lost to love, and lost to me ?
Maiden hear ! O hear me now !
Ere too late retract thy vow !

Thou art wise and thou art royal,
Thou hast countless lovers loyal,

Wherefore should decree of fate
Crush thy life beneath its weight ?
Wherefore, lady, should'st thou be
Lost to love, and lost to me ?
Maiden hear ! O hear me now !
Ere too late retract thy vow !

The music ceased, the lady stood,
Breathless, as one amazed ;
Her eyes still fastened on the wood,
Her right hand slightly raised ;
Her foot half poised, as if for flight,
She seemed some vision of the night,
Or angel down from Heaven flown,
Or nymph, or naiad, carved in stone.
Again the player swept the strings,
Again he raised his voice in love,
Again with hope renewed he sings,
And seeks the maiden's heart to move ;
Again the lady bends to hear
Love's whispers from the orange grove.

SONG.

Fair lady ! soft zephyrs still murmur thy name,
The night-winds thy virtues and beauty proclaim.
The nightingale whispers thy praise to the rose,
And the rivulet echoes the sound as it flows.

I have heard of thy fame in my far island home,
And to woo thee, and win thee, Gonzalvo is come.

I have silks from the loom, I have gems from the
mine,

My banquet is spread with the costliest wine :
I have deer in the forest, and fish in the deep ;
I have fountains and songsters to lull thee to sleep.
I have navies on ocean, and armies on land,
While numberless slaves but await my command.

I have maidens so lovely that, 'twere not for thee,
They were rivaled alone by the nymphs of the sea ;
I have flowers so rich, and so varied in dye,
That they shame the bright tints of the many-hued
sky—

I have gardens and orchards abounding with fruit,
Where the thrush and the mocking-bird never are
mute.

The zephyrs come laden with sweetest perfume ;
The peach tree and orange are bursting in bloom ;
The beams of the Day-god now ravish the sight,
The silver moon softens the dark brow of night ;
The stars lend their radiance, old ocean's deep dye
Reflects the rich shades of the midsummer sky.

There are fauns on the mountain, and nymphs in
the dell ;
The gnome of the fountain still weaveth his spell ;

The brownie still roameth the forest so lone,
The home of the fay is my far island home ;
The faeries all waiting, stand grouped on the green ;
They stay but thy coming, they wait for their
 queen !

My bark is in waiting, the night-wind so free,
Still ripples the brow of the dark purple sea ;
My sailors impatiently fondle the oar,
And eagerly watch my return to the shore ;
My boat, and my bark, and the night-wind so free,
All stay for thy coming, they wait but for thee.

My steed stands impatient, and swift as the wind,
We'll mock all pursuit and leave danger behind ;
My ship spreads her pinions, and true to the wheel,
Still spurns the bright wave from her swift fleeting
 keel.

All stay for thy coming, they wait but for thee ;
Then fly with me, maid, to mine isle of the sea.

Now the pale moon bending lowly,
 Sinks beneath the horizon ;
Now the bright stars fading slowly,
 Quench their lustre one by one.
Now the first glad beams of morning,
 Brightly gild the western surge ;
Now the Sun-god, red and lurid,
 Gleams above the eastern verge.

From each battlement and rampart,
 Decked as for a holiday,
Pennons bright, and banners royal,
 Floating meet the morning ray.
From each war-ship in the harbor,
 From each turret on the shore,
Ring forth strains of martial music,
 Bursts the cannons' deafening roar.

Every voice in exultation,
 Swelleth high the glad acclaim,
Till each mountain cleft and valley,
 Echoes naught but Aimee's name.
Ev'ry pennon, ev'ry banner,
 Martial strain and brazen gun,
All proclaim the royal bridal,
 And the triumph of the Sun!

Lo ! adown the mountain steep,
Where a vast procession moves,
Priests and vestals slowly wending,
Downward still their steps are bending ;
Down through verdant woods and forests,
Down through fragrant orange groves.
Hark ! The priests in joyous measure,
Loudly chant their matin strain ;
Hark ! The white-robed vestal choral
Echoes back the glad refrain.

HYMN.

We hail thee, we hail thee, bright god of the day,
Our vows and our homage now humbly we pay ;
We praise thee, we praise thee, for heat and for
light,
We praise thee for chasing the dark shades of night.

We praise thee for life, and we praise thee for health,
We praise thee for wisdom, we praise thee for wealth ;
We praise thee in waking, we praise thee for sleep,
We praise thee that safely thy servants did keep.

We praise thee for wheat, and we praise thee for
wine,
For the pearl of the ocean, the gem of the mine ;
We praise thee for corn we so joyfully reap,
For the deer in the forest, the fish in the deep.

We praise thee for valley, we praise thee for moun-
tain ;
We praise thee for brooklet, we praise thee for
fountain ;
We praise thee for ocean, we praise thee for earth ;
We praise thee for death as we praise thee for
birth !

We praise thee, we praise thee, for all that we have,
Be it beast from the forest, or fish from the wave ;
Be it wheat from the harvest, or gem from the mine,
We praise thee, we praise thee, oh, Day-god divine !

They cease ; and lo ! on either side,
The people backward pressed
By mailed guards, who open wide
A pathway for the Sun-god's bride,
For vestal and for priest.

But hark ! From out the palace gate
Echoes a cry of dread !
A cry so sad and desolate,
That priests and vestals pausing wait
The meaning of such anguish great,
A wail as for the dead !

* * * * *

'Tis true ! The Sun's bride from the palace is gone.
The Day-god is mocked and her father undone ;
The valleys that knew her shall know her no more ;
And the mountain-breeze seeks her in vain on the
shore.

O'er the bright smiling waters, Gonzalvo doth roam,
And bears his fair bride to his far island home.
The Day-god played blindly, bold Cupid has won,
And the Corsair hath stolen the bride of the Sun.

*THE QUEST OF THE NIGHT-
WIND.*

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THE QUEST OF THE NIGHT-WIND.

A CHRISTMAS TALE.

I.

THE sun hath set on the city's hive,
And gloomily falls the Christmas eve.
The night-wind, laden with snow and sleet,
Hurries along the deserted street ;
In a church-yard nigh he wildly raves,
And moans above the silent graves ;
Among the branches he sadly grieves,
And whirls aloft the withered leaves ;
He clanks the tomb-chains, stiff with rust,
And shrieks aloud like a spirit lost ;
Anon he mounts the gloomy stair,
Which leads to the bell-loft cold and bare ;
He wakes the echoes which haunt the tower,
And mingles them with his sullen roar ;
He grasps the bell-rope dangling near,
And makes the great bell moan with fear ;

He peers thro' the casements, white with snow,
And hurls defiance at all below ;
Anon, descending, he wends his way
To the wharves and docks of the silent bay ;
He searches amid the scatter'd bales,
And tosses the heaps of mouldy sails ;
Now mounts to the cross-tree high in air,—
Now whistles, and shrieks thro' the cordage bare ;
Again descending, his search in vain,
He moans and wails like one in pain ;
Again he plies his anxious quest
Like a very demon of sad unrest.
Why is the night-wind's spirit cross'd ?
What is the treasure the wind hath lost ?

II.

A gloomy arch by the river's side,
Just above the encroaching tide ;
Some tatter'd garments, a whisp of straw,
To shield from the night-wind cold and raw ;
A human form is lying there,
A girlish figure with golden hair ;
Where prowling vermin softly creep,
A girlish figure wrapt in sleep ;
Where the slimy waters come and go,
A child of misery, want and woe.

A wretched waif from the crowded street,
Hiding away in this lone retreat ;
A worthless wild-flower, touched with blight,
Drooping apart in the gloomy night ;
With garments tattered, and limbs half bare,
But a wondrous wealth of golden hair ;
With features pinched, and pale, and wan,
Yet a lovely face to gaze upon.
Her yellow locks, in a wavy tide,
Dispose themselves on either side ;
From the sleeping features backward roll'd,—
An angel face in a frame of gold !
Where poisonous vapors nightly sweep,
A child of misery—lost in sleep.
Sleep,—that cometh alike to all,
In lowly cottage, or stately hall ;
Yet will often fly from a royal bed
To keep his tryst in the beggar's shed.
Sleep,—that drieth the widow's tears,
Sleep,—that quelleth the orphan's fears ;
Sleep,—that steepeth the soul in lethe,
Sleep,—twin brother, and type of death.

III.

The play is ended. A sudden glow
Streams thro' the door on the drifted snow ;

A panel'd carriage is standing nigh,
And servants in gorgeous livery ;
A daughter of fashion, proud and fair,
In costly raiment and jewels rare ;
One of the drones who rule the earth
Thro' freak of fortune or chance of birth ;
One of the favored who do not know
The meaning of " misery, want and woe.""
One of those moths of the upper air,
Of roseate clouds and zephyrs fair ;
Who sail along o'er summer seas,
With naught to mar luxurious ease ;
'Midst the flowers of life, who bask and play,
And sip their nectar from day to day ;
But knowing nothing of tempests dread,
Of storm-clouds dark, and skies of lead ;
But knowing nothing of rocks beneath,
Nor of quicksands ending in dismal death ;
Nor of cruel serpents coiled below
The flowers of life that charm them so.
Features who live high overhead
Are hungry for daily bread ;
The cry of the hungry for daily bread ;
And if, by chance, they should hear that cry,
Would esteem it a fiction, and pass it by.

No mortal, ever, when filled with bread,
Hath power to compass his fellow's need ;
Nor one who basks on the height of joy
To fathom the vale of misery ;
I doubt if the saints who in heaven dwell,
Know aught of the anguish that reigns in hell.
" Only a penny to buy some bread ! "
She hears the cry, but she will not heed ;
Half in wonder and half in fear,
She pauses a moment that cry to hear ;
Then sweeps away in her jewel'd pride,
With her liveried servants on either side.

IV.

In a stately mansion of costly stone,
The lady reclines on a couch of down ;
Surrounded by every luxury
That wealth may grant or want deny ;
Yet wearily tossing from side to side,
Still craving a boon—which is still denied.
Vainly craving the boon of sleep,
Which comes unask'd to the dungeon keep ;
Which comes unask'd to the weary one
Who hath toil'd from morn till the setting sun ;
Which comes unask'd to the tented field
And with visions of peace each heart is filled ;

As the soldier dreams of his parents gray,
Of the early scenes of his boyhood's play ;
Of the maiden he loves, with sunny smile,
Who awaits him now by the well-known stile.

In dreams, he quickens his anxious pace,—
Now folds her close in his fond embrace,
And rains on her lips the kisses sweet,
With which lovers are wont true love to greet.

In dreams, they now at the altar stand,
Pledge heart to heart, and hand to hand ;

In dreams, he hears upon every side,
Loud praises paid to his lovely bride ;

And feels his heart with rapture bound
To the joyous swell of the organ's sound :

Then wakens to find that the night is gone,
And a warning blast on the wind is borne ;

To hear the roll of the warlike drum,
And the cry—"THE FOE! TO ARMS! THEY
COME!"

Then hurriedly rising hastes away
To join in the din of the deadly fray ;

To exchange his vision of kisses sweet
For the fierce embraces a foeman greet ;

To exchange his raptures of marriage bed
For the lonely couch of the gory dead !

And the maid he loved to the stile will come,
Vainly to look for her warrior home ;
But at last—awaked by the tidings rude,
Will weep in her widow'd maidenhood.
Ah ! The life of our dreams is fair and gay,
But nightmare horrors infest the day ;
Thrice happy is he who the night redeems,
Who forgets the day, and lives only in dreams !

V.

“ GLORY TO GOD—GOOD WILL TO MEN ! ”
The streets re-echo the glad refrain ;
With joyous clangor, loud and clear,
The bells peal forth on the midnight air ;
Telling of One in the long ago,
Who was born to a life of want and woe.
Telling of One whose birth was mean,
And His only heritage grief and pain ;
Who gave unto man His latest breath,
And sealed His life with a cruel death.
The lady hears, and she lifts on high,
Her arms in a sudden agony ;
As memory wakes with the clanging bells,
And conscience its fearful errand tells ;
For standing nigh in the twilight gray,
Is a sight she fain would hide away !

Standing nigh in the twilight cold,
A girlish figure with locks of gold ;
With features pinched, and pale, and wan,
'Tis a mournful sight to gaze upon ;
With the sunken cheek, and the hollow eye,
Which tell of want and misery ;
But the light of life from the eye is fled,
And its gaze is the stony gaze of the dead !
The slanting beams thro' the casement shine,
And fall on the coverlid line on line :
Fall through the phantom standing there,—
Mortality's semblance—wrought in air ;
And she knows full well with a terrible dread,
'Tis no earthly creature that guards her bed.
Nearer and nearer, she sees it come,
And she fain would shriek, but her voice is dumb ;
Nearer and nearer, with noiseless glide,
'Till the spectre stands by the lady's side.
Now her arm is seized in an icy grip,
And words are framed by the pallid lip ;
And her very heart seems turned to stone,
At the sound of that ghostly monotone ;
As in mournful cadence it sinks and swells,
With the rise and fall of the chiming bells ;

With the rise and fall of the carols sweet,
Echoing back from the distant street.

VI.

“Lady! Thy life hath been fair from birth,
But I in misery trod the earth ;

“Thy taste hath been sated with every good,
But I have pined for lack of food ;

“Thou hast slept at night in a lordly bed,
When I knew not the where to lay my head ;

“Thou hast covered thyself with a royal dress,
When I starved in rags and nakedness ;

“To pleasures and flattery thou wert born,
I to privation, pain, and scorn ;

“Thou to be praised, caress’d, and blest,
I to be beaten, and wrong’d, and curst !

“Lady! my lot hath been to thine
As worthless water to priceless wine ;

“As the dire despair of the doomed in woe,
To the rapturous peace which the ransomed know ;

“As the gloom and shadow of blackest night,
To effulgent splendors of noonday light ;

“Thy lot to mine, as the joys that dwell
In Heaven above—to the pains of Hell !

“We met by chance but yesternight,
When the storm-wind blew and the snow lay white ;

“When I humbly sued for a morsel of bread,
And you turned away with scornful tread ;

“ You turned away to your carriage nigh,
I to the street and the wintry sky ;

“ You to your home of wealth and pride,
I to the arch by the river's side ;

“ You to a couch of softest down,
I to the snow-drift, cold and lone !

“ Lady ! The God who cares for all,
And marks, not unmov'd, e'en a sparrow fall ;

“ Will surely judge between thee and me,—
My need, and thy prosperity !

“ For know this truth—that all things of worth
Are but talents lent by the Lord of earth ;

“ And none may treasure them as his own,
For even the least to the Lord is known ;

“ And He will repay the selfish pride,
Which—out of affluence—want denied ! ”

VII.

Now merrily wakes the Christmas morn,
And joyous sounds on the wind are borne ;
As the bells peal forth to the list'ning air,
And summon the people to praise and prayer ;
While far and near each echoing street
Resounds to the tread of hurrying feet.

They resound to the tread of those who pay
Their vows to Him who was born to-day ;

They resound to the tread of the proud who come
To bow at the name of the lowly One ;

In costly raiment, with stately mien,
To worship the humble Nazarene ;

Forgetting, alas ! in their selfish pride,
That by them is He daily crucified.

For—are not the poor with us to-day,
Successors of Him who hath pass'd away ?

And the burden they bear of grief and scorn,
The same the crucified One hath borne ?

Their lot of suffering, shame, and death,
The same that was meted to Him on earth ?

And these countless churches of costly stone,
We build to the name of that lowly One ;

Garnished without, and bright within,
With storied casement and golden sheen ;

While under their shadows nightly lie
The wretched, who hunger for sympathy :—

While under their shadows the homeless brood,
And thousands perish for lack of food !

I ask,—is not each a gilded lie,—
A sort of religious mockery ?

Like scenes which the desert lost deride,
Or the empty feast of the Barmacide ;
Or those apples of Sodom which tempt the eye,
But are filled with dust and vanity.
For the starving wretch, in the twilight dim,
Will wondering dream of the wealth within ;
And vainly ponder the reason why
Homeless and hungry, he must die,—
When less than a tithe of that wealth would bring
Joy—to the many suffering.
Ah ! would to God we had less of pride,
And more of the heart of Him who died !
Were it not better to feed the poor,
Than paint a window or carve a door ?
Better to shelter the homeless one,
Than build to the Lord a church of stone ?
I fear, these fanes to the Crucified
Are but monuments reared unto human pride !

VIII.

In the lady's chamber, twilights gray
Proclaim the approach of the god of day ;
And anon the twilights, pale and cold,
Are chased by the fairy sunbeams bold ;
All sturdy warriors, tried and true,
They mount to the casement and clamber through.

Blithe and bold are they I ween
As ever the knights of earth were seen ;
All armed are they with swords of light,
And in armor of burnished gold bedight ;
As along the carpet they softly glide,
Till they flank the couch upon either side.
Now their leader bold to the coverlid trips,
And snatches a kiss from the sleeper's lips :
Kisses her lips till she moans with pain,
Then lightly leaps to the floor again ;
Now he marshals his forces blithe and gay,
And they mount to the casement and hie away.
The lady awakes with a moan of pain,
And presses her hands to her aching brain ;
As memory tells of the night-wind cold,
Of a girlish figure with locks of gold ;
Of tremulous lips which vainly prayed
For a penny wherewith to purchase bread.
And yet again stern memory tells
Of midnight carols and chiming bells ;
Of the ghostly message, and glassy stare,
Of a phantom figure wrought in air ;
Ah ! so terribly real 'twould surely seem
It must have been more than a passing dream ;

And never shall peace her mind attain
Till that fearful phantom is laid again.

IX.

Now hurriedly robing, the lady fair,
Must brave the chill of the morning air ;
As she hastens away o'er the city wide,
And gains the arch by the river's side ;
The gloomy arch where the homeless sleep,
Where the wretched moan and the friendless weep ;
Where society's outcasts nightly lie,
And bury their shame and their misery :
Where poisonous vapors oppress the breath,
And the air is rank with the seeds of death.
But all too late is succor come,
For at last the wretched hath found a home ;
A haven of rest for the weary one,
Where sorrow and suffering are all unknown ;
From the gloomy arch, and the wintry night,
The homeless hath entered the realms of light.
Now all in vain shall the lady seek
Health to restore to that frozen cheek ;
Aye, all in vain may she tax her art
To awaken the pulse of that lifeless heart ;
In vain from those pallid lips to win
Forgiveness now for her cruel sin ;

And in vain shall the Night-wind ply his quest,
Since the maiden he loved hath gone to rest.

'Twas he who fondly lingered near,
In that last dread hour of mortal fear ;

'Twas he who wove her a snowy vest,
And folded her hands on her peaceful breast ;

Then shook out her hair in many a fold,
Till it wrapt her form like a frame of gold,

And sadly left her to roam the street,
To sing of her beauty and wail her fate.

Ah ! vainly now shall he seek his bride,
In the lonely arch by the river's side ;

For the river of death hath the maiden cross'd,
And the angels have found—what the wind hath
lost !

THE PATHS OF LIFE.

THE PATHS OF LIFE.

I.

FOR sober thought, 'tis proper food
What goal in life should be our aim,
What path should by our feet be trod,
Or wealth, or joy, or power, or fame !

The road to wealth is passing straight ;
The goal is—plenty, friendship, ease ;
The means—rise early, stay up late,
Live frugally, and work like bees.

The second, mortals seldom find ;
And they who think they find, may miss ;
The means—each suits his several mind ;
The goal is—perfect happiness.

The third and fourth lie side by side,
Along a beetling precipice ;
Full many men these paths have tried,
But few attain the goal—success.

There is a fifth, but seldom sought—
It being tedious of ascent—
It leads within the realms of thought,
And lies round a poetic bent.

These different paths mankind ascend,
And each with joy and pain is rife ;
All reach at last one common end,—
They stop at death—the wall of life.

II.

The road to wealth we glance at first,
And here the startled critic sees
That they attain their aim the best
Who creep along on hands and knees.

All eager seem to reach the top,
But each pursues a different course ;
One stays to help a comrade up,
A thousand, scoffing, by him pass.

One seems to be a patron's pet,
Who, graciously, assistance lends ;
Another lucky man is met,
And carried up by troops of friends.

Some scramble over others' heads,
And scruple not to tread them down ;
One rudely strikes his fellow dead,
Then makes his property his own.

Some seek to tunnel through the earth,
And some to sail along the seas ;
One lucky fellow at his birth
Is landed midst the topmost trees.

A few attempt, by sudden spring,
At once the highest point to gain ;
Sometimes one manages to cling,
But nearly all roll down again.

III.

For joy, some seek in pomp and show ;
Some, hoarding heaps of yellow dust :
In friendship some ; a few I know
In love, but thousands more in lust.

One person seems his joy to find
In tripping up his neighbor's heels ;
Another still (to ease his mind),
To all, the latest scandal tells.

In eating, when they've had enough,
Some people seem to find content,
While some wax merry drinking stuff
Call'd wine, which makes them eloquent.

In traveling, one appears to please
His taste, and soothe a restless mind ;
Another still, in idle ease
His solace chiefly seems to find.

Yon fellow, with the scarlet-lined
Surtout and military boots—
A sort of licensed butcher—finds
His pleasure cutting others' throats.

Thus each pursues the bubble joy,
But few, alas ! with much success ;
When caught, 'tis mixed with base alloy,
And few, indeed, find happiness.

IV.

The roads to power chiefly lie
Thro' burning towns and heaps of slain,
And trav'lers usually rely
On ready hand and steady brain.

There may be highways, not of blood,
Which lead this way, but they are rare ;
Not many on the peak have stood,
Unless through gore they waded there.

Some few employ assassin's skill,
And some the poisoned draught prepare ;
While others, their opponents kill
To music, in the open air.

The first two mentioned kinds of strife
Have fallen into disrepute,
And he who takes a *single* life
Is counted now a savage brute.

This is foul murder ; but when fall
A *million* in a single war—
Ah ! *That is glory !* We extol
The hero to the highest star.

To fathom the philosophy
Of this, I cannot make pretence,
But think, perhaps, plurality
And music make the difference.

V.

Full many seek the path of fame—
This near the road to power lies ;
But very few that path attain,
And fewer still attain the prize.

Of all the four, this is, perchance,
The steepest, and most like to miss ;
Above, the threatening avalanche ;
Below, the fathomless abyss.

Some strive upon the field of blood
To win themselves a lasting name ;
And some, by carving blocks of wood
And stone, to woo the fickle dame.

And one before a canvas stands
And vainly seeks thereon to trace,
In earthly tints, with earthly hands,
A vision of celestial grace.

While others trim their lamps with oil,
And study far into the night.
Perchance, but scarcely, may their toil
Succeed ; they oftener sink from sight.

Some few attempt, by kindly deed,
To make their names forever burn ;
But those who in the main succeed,
Are they who work the greatest harm.

VI.

Now, fifth and last, our eyes we turn
To thought, and seek to bend our sight
Where, dimly mapp'd, we scarce discern
The path, nor mark the rays of light

Which faintly gleam. But few, forsooth,
The pilgrims who *this* path commence,—
They lean upon the staff of *truth*,
And bear the lamp of *common sense*.

Before the portal, still we find
Two hags, who firmly bar advance ;
The one is Superstition—blind ;
The other, deaf—named Ignorance.

The first from all the other roads
Draws toll, but Reason's road is free ;
She, hearing travelers, straightway goads
Hag Ignorance to frenzy.

Hag Superstition constant tells
Of ghouls, who in this path abide,
And moans about two ghastly hells,
Which God hath placed on either side.

The *facts* are these : that all who gain
The first few miles, proceed with ease ;
Learn love to God, good-will to men,
Live happily, and die in peace.

VII.

Thus each one seeks a path in life,
Thus all with tottering steps ascend,
While sun and cloud alternate strive
O'er all, until the common end.

Each thinks his neighbor's path with light
More largely blessed than is his own,
And murmurs at the dismal height
Above, which he must climb alone.

Some mourn because another road
They did not choose when life begun,
And moan about the grievous load
They bear, while others lightly run.

At last, all reach the dismal moat
Call'd " Death," which bounds the wall of life.
And here, there being neither boat
Nor bridge, ensues a wordy strife.

Each one insists, all others lack

 Good sense, himself, by heaven taught ;

One climbs upon his neighbor's back,

 Another tries the wings of thought.

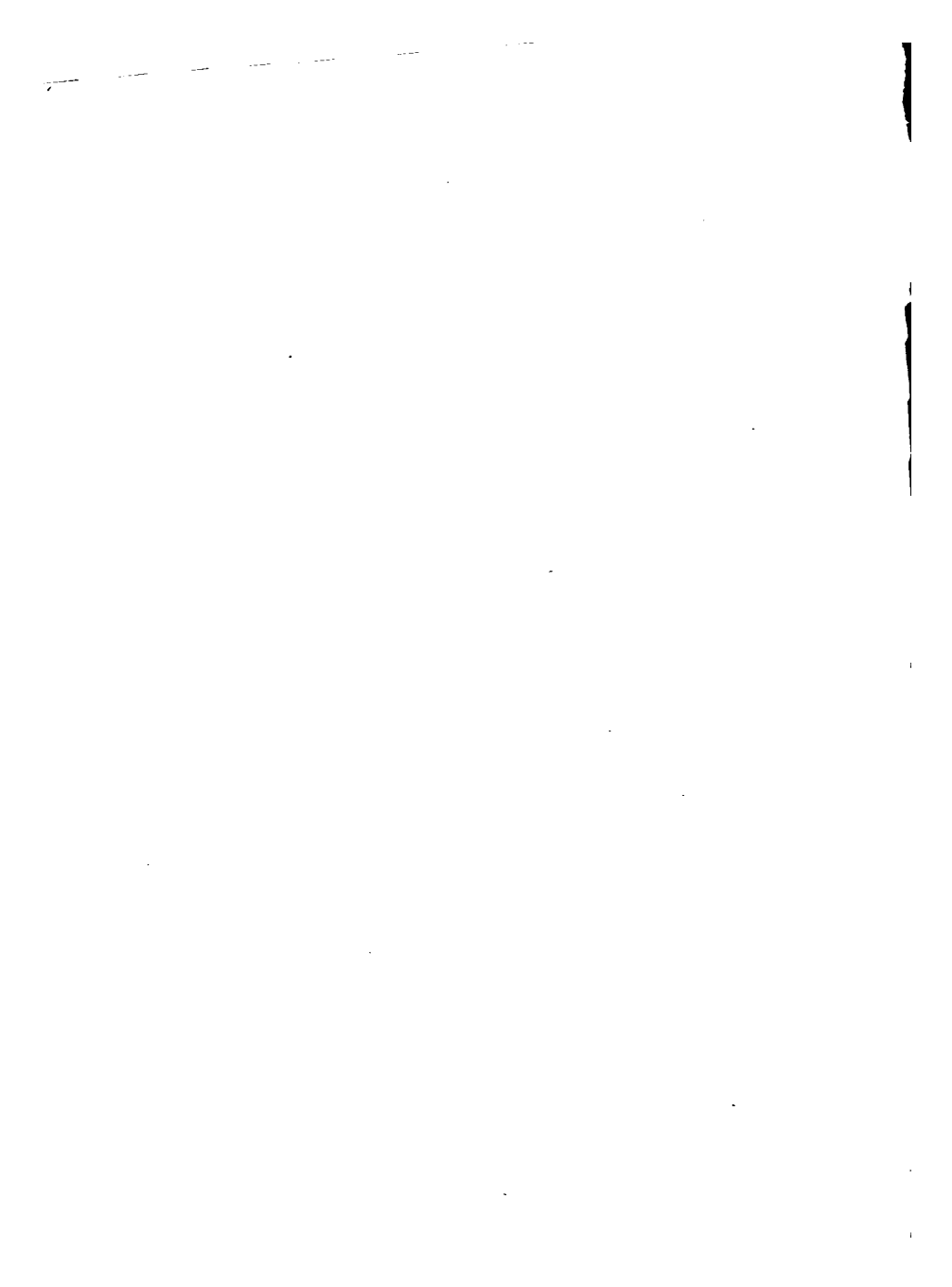
And thus, alas ! we sadly see

 Much discord while the way is sought ;

If any friends would come with me,

 I travel by the line of thought.

THE VOICELESS SOUL.



THE VOICELESS SOUL.

ONE morn, before the throne of light,
A trembling spirit veiled her sight.
In radiant bands, on either side,
Her sister spirits smiling glide ;
Each brow with happiness elate,
She only stands disconsolate.

Th' assembl'd hosts, with one accord,
Unite to praise their Sovereign Lord ;
Each happy voice, with glad acclaim,
Sings triumphs to Jehovah's name ;
Yet she, of all that mighty throng,
Nor strikes the harp, nor joins the song.

They each some precious off'ring bring
As tribute to their Heav'nly King ;
They lay their gifts before the throne
And gladly their allegiance own ;
This spirit only mutely stands
With downcast look, and empty hands.



From out the fleecy clouds of light
Which veil His glory from the sight,
By music sweet the air is stirr'd,—
Anon a still, small voice is heard ;—
The silent hosts with one accord
Await the message of their Lord.

“ Fair spirit ! in the realms of light,
Why veilest thou thy trembling sight ?
While all the hosts my praise proclaim
Why failest thou to hymn my name ?
While echo loudly harp and lute,
Why thine alone so sadly mute ?

“ Full threescore years thou trod'st the earth
In life, since first I sent thee forth ;
I furnished thee with talents ten,
And bade thee bring me mine again
With usury,—now wherefore stand
With downcast look, and empty hand ?

“ Still silent ! What the deep disgrace
Which causest thee to hide thy face ?
Still silent ! Where the talents ten,
And where the gains I bid thee bring ?
Rebellious spirit ! Answer make !
Unveil thy face ! I bid thee speak ! ”

By anguish bow'd, she at the word
Obey'd the mandate of her Lord ;
Unveil'd her brow, where sorrow's trace
Seem'd still to mark the heart's disgrace ;
Then prostrate fell before the throne,
And thus began her plaintive moan :

“ Lord ! truly didst thou send me forth
For threescore years to tread the earth ;
Thou gavest truly—talents ten,
And bade me bring thee thine again
With usury ! O Lord ! since then
I've roamed the earth in speechless pain !

“ Thou gavest, Lord, an ample choice
Of treasures rich, yet gave no voice ;
I sought those treasures to impart,
And found them lock'd within my heart,
In ocean's depths—I lay athirst !
Midst plenty—was by famine curs'd !

“ North, South, East, West, upon the earth,
I've wander'd since thou sent me forth ;
My soul in silent anguish bow'd,
A lonely wretch amidst a crowd,—
A beggar'd prince, a swordless knight,
A blind man mourning for his sight !



“ My heart with love untold was fill'd ;
My soul with speechless music thrill'd ;
Amaz'd with sound, my raptur'd ears
Drank in the music of the spheres ;
Where'er I turn'd, some new delight
Disclosed upon my ravish'd sight !

“ I own'd thy grace, and pow'r and love,
In Earth beneath, and Heav'n above ;
I vainly sought thy praise to sing
And of thy mercies make my theme ;
Unblest, amidst a myriad joys,
I speechless mourn'd, I had no voice !

“ Thou gavest, Lord, bright talents ten,
Lo ! here I bring thee thine again ;
Take that is thine ! My bidden task,
Tho' unfulfill'd—I trembling ask
Thy mercy, Lord ! And humbly prone
I prostrate lie before thy throne ! ”

From out those radiant clouds of light
Which veil His glory, and His might ;
Again the list'ning air is stirr'd :—
Again that still small voice is heard :—
“ Fair spirit ! well has thy defence
Explain'd what seem'd thy gross offence !

“ This—suff’ring soul, shall be thy meed,—
Heav’ns choirs in song, henceforth to lead ;
Thy harp shall sound a loftier theme,
Th’ *justice* of thy Sovereign King !
Bright spirit ! enter to thy rest,
And be henceforth forever blest ! ”

THE VOICES OF THE AIR.

THE VOICES OF THE AIR.

THERE'S a sighing in the forest,
There's a moaning on the sea,
As of sad imprisoned spirits
Who are struggling to be free ;
And the burden of their yearning
Is poured forth for evermore,
In the wind among the branches
And the waves upon the shore.

There are peals of ghostly laughter,
There are anguish'd cries of pain,
There are sighs of feeble women,
There are moans of stalwart men ;
There are wails of little children
Ever mingling with the roar
Of the wind among the branches
And the waves upon the shore.

There are strains of martial music,
There are tinkling notes of peace,
There are words of angry import,
There are accents framed to please ;
There are blows, and soft caresses,
Ever blending with the roar
Of the wind among the branches
And the waves upon the shore.

There are sounds of battle fury,
As when mighty hosts engage,
The vanquished's cry for mercy,
And the victor's cry of rage ;
The clang of charging squadrons,
And the cannon's sullen roar,
In the wind among the branches
And the waves upon the shore. .

There is bacchanalian singing,
There are hungry cries for bread,
There are marriage peans ringing,
There are tollings for the dead ;
There are sounds of loud rejoicing,
There are wailings evermore,
In the wind among the branches
And the waves upon the shore.

Who are these ghostly legions
That are circling everywhere,
Through the dim, unearthly regions,
Of the pale and spectral air ;
Whose voices' mournful cadence,
Ever mingles with the roar
Of the wind among the branches
And the waves upon the shore ?

They are disembodied spirits
Who have run the race of life,
Who have drank its cup of sorrow,
Who have fought its bitter strife ;
Who, like us, once wondered blindly,
As they listened to the roar
Of the wind among the branches
And the waves upon the shore.

Condemn'd to sad recital
Of the story of their life,
They re-act each scene of folly,
They re-count each deed of strife ;
All their crimes, and mad ambitions,
Are rehearsed amid the roar
Of the wind among the branches
And the waves upon the shore.

A trackless sea before us,
We are drifting ever on
To join that phantom chorus,
And to swell their ghostly song;
Full soon, our voices blending,
Will be lost amid the roar
Of the wind among the branches
And the waves upon the shore.

THE SLEIGH-RIDE.

THE SLEIGH-RIDE.

CALM and bright was the winter's night
When I asked my love to ride ;
And the shadows lay on our lonely way
Through the forest dark and wide.

The air was cold, but our hearts were bold,
I circled her with my arm ;
“ O what care we, tho' cold it be,
With love to keep us warm ! ”

The forest is pass'd, and we reach at last,
(Too quick the moments hied) ;
The tavern gay, where a bright array
Are gathered from far and wide.

“ All hail to thee ! ” and hand grasp free,
Our late arrival greet ;
And friendly word is echoing heard,
As old acquaintance meet.

“ Now quickly hie to the ballroom nigh,
Let the players tax their might ;
Nor music sweet, nor dances fleet
May last till morning light.”

Ah ! my bosom swells, as memory tells
How we floated on, and on ;
How our feet kept time to the music’s rhyme,
How two hearts beat as one !

All, all too soon comes the midnight moon,
The dancers leave the floor ;
The partings said,—the guests are sped,
And the festive scene is o’er.

Now cold and dark lies the forest stark,
And the night wind makes his moan
High o’er head, where the branches dead
With mosses are over-grown.

But what care I for the wintry sky,
Or what for the rising storm ?
“ Let the wild wind rave, our hearts are brave,
And love will shield from harm ! ”

Fast, fast we fled ! As we onward sped
My snorting courser shied ;
But what care I for a night-hawk’s cry,
She hath promised to be my bride !

On, on we flew ! Ah ! now I knew
Some demon lurked behind ;
For a mournful cry came rushing by
Borne on the startl'd wind !

I knew full well that sound of hell
Through the forest cold and lone ;
And I sought in vain to quell the pain
Which turn'd my heart to stone.

Tho' swift I knew was my courser true,
The forest was dark and wide ;
And I mourn'd full sore to think I bore
My loved one by my side.

Away ! away ! The foam-flakes gray—
The bright sparks fly like rain ;
But swifter still, down yonder hill,
Dark shadows flit amain !

Now, God above, look down in love,
And shield us with thy might ;
Or the mournful moan of the forest lone
Our requiem sings to-night !

Away ! away ! My gallant gray
Alas ! is sorely tried ;
While steadily gain, with eyes aflame,
The wolves on either side !

Now mad with fear, in his wild career,
My steed makes sudden bound ;
The sleigh turns o'er—in terror sore
We fall on the icy ground.

We wait for death with labor'd breath,
I clasp her with my arm,—
“The wild wolves nigh, we may still defy,
For love will shield from harm !”

Now God be praised ! I stand amaz'd !
The yelling crew have flown !
My steed speeds on, the wolves have gone,
And we are left alone !

Away ! away ! My gallant gray,
Thy steps are wing'd with fright !
But the wild wolves' cry is all too nigh,
Their feet are all too light !

For hark ! That wail, borne down the gale,
May well suspend the breath ;
'Tis the anguish'd neigh of my noble gray,
As he meets a fearful death !

“Now haste ! O haste ! Not a moment waste,
Ere the fiends forsake their prey !”
I turn'd to find my love had swoon'd,—
Upon the ground she lay.

Ha! Far below lies the river's flow,
Hard bound its frozen surge ;
Now yon fallen tree shall our refuge be
Poised o'er the dizzy verge !

Her form I raise. Now God be prais'd !
I have reach'd the fallen pine !
And with foot of dread my path I tread
Along its treacherous line !

Far, far below lies the river's flow,
Its iron crust beneath ;
A dizzy sight in the murky light,—
'Twere a fearful fall to death !

Cold, cold it blew ! the snow-flakes flew,
I clasp'd her senseless form ;
As we trembling lay o'er that chasm gray,
With but love to keep us warm.

Anon the air became more fair,
The storm-wind blew less chill ;
And tripping feet, and music sweet,
Came echoing o'er the hill.

Alas ! in vain I strove to gain
My senses as they fled ;
And yet I knew—yon hellish crew
That treacherous music made.

Full well I knew the storm-wind through
Had steep'd my soul in lethe ;
And the tripping feet and the music sweet
Were heralds of coming death !

There, close beside, lay my promis'd bride ;
O'er her lips, so pale and wan,
A smile there play'd, as she sleeping said,—
“ And love will shield from harm ! ”

O'er the chasm deep, now lost in sleep,
Unheard the night-wind's moan ;
Unheard the cry of the wild wolves nigh
In the forest cold and lone.

But while we sleep, a shadow creeps
Along the trembling pine ;
With eye of flame, with bristling mane,
And form so gaunt and grim !

He hath reach'd my side ! He hath seized my bride !
Unbends my feeble hold !
I feel her slip from the palsied grip,
Of my hands benumb'd with cold !

Now, God above, look down in love,
And rescue her with Thy might,
From the cruel jaw and the hungry maw
Of the forest wolf this night !

But one step more and they reach the shore,
The gray wolf's task is done ;
Ah ! Christ be bless'd ! His feet have miss'd !
And the chasm claims its own !

Down ! down they go ! on the frozen snow
I hear them strike beneath ;
The gray wolf nigh to my love hard by,
But his eyes are closed in death !

Now get ye gone through the forest lone,
Ye have robb'd me of my bride ;
But your cruel jaw, and your hungry maw,
Shall remain unsatisfied !

Aye ! get ye gone, ere the morning sun
Shall gild the scene of death ;
Where I lonely lie on my pine tree high,
My dead love far beneath !

Aye ! get ye gone, for the echoing horn
Is winding far and near ;
And the eager sound of my faithful hound,
And my father's voice I hear !

* * * * *

Long years have fled since that night of dread
When I ask'd my love to ride,
When I lonely lay o'er that chasm gray
In the forest dark and wide.

My locks grew white on that fearful night,—
For months I courted death ;
Ah ! would I had died by my loved one's side,
On the river far beneath !

Full well I know I shall shortly go,
I shall clasp her angel form :
On a brighter shore we shall part no more,
And love will shield from harm !

SOLITUDE.

SOLITUDE.

A SUMMER IDYL.

How sweet to leave the bustle of the town,
And wander thro' the woodlands all alone :
To mark the mellow sunbeams drifting down
Through hanging boughs, while, like a loose veil
thrown,
High over all is seen the azure sky's majestic
dome.

What myriad, myriad voices in the air,
Shrill, tiny voices, hailing as I pass ;
A ceaseless hum which greets me everywhere,
The very leaves seem vocal, and the grass
For rapturous joy is fain, each blade, all others
to surpass.

The drowsy locust, hymning as he goes,
The merry cricket, and the amorous bee ;
The humming-bird, who lingers o'er the rose
One instant only, then away doth flee,
Midst other charms to wanton, and still other
scenes to see.

Like far-off echoes from the land of dreams,
I hear the distant bleating of the flocks ;
The watch-dog's bark, while yet more distant seems
The measured striking of the village clocks,
And angry clarion challenges rehearsed by rival
cocks.

The babbling brooklet in its pebbly bed,
A tortuous course with rippling murmur weaves ;
The gentle wood-doves cooing overhead,
The voiceless rhythm of the falling leaves,
And all the countless sounds unheard which yet
the mind perceives.

How calm the aspect of yon purple hills,
Which brood, and brood, and brood for ever-
more ;
Forever brooding. O ! my spirit thrills
With eager longing for their hidden store
Of secret knowledge, and their mystic legendary
lore.

For they have brooded thus for countless years,
Aye, brooded thus ere Time his course began ;
Unmoved, have marked the flood of human fears,
And human hopes, which crowd life's little span ;
Have heard unmoved, the last faint piping of the
insect man.

Forever waiting, still they seem to be
Forever waiting for we know not what :
An awful sense of mighty mystery,
Of something yet to come, or something that
Hath passed beyond our ken, which was, but
now is not.

Like mighty giants, limned against the sky,
Each monstrous bulk upheaves from out the
plain ;
All motionless, in endless sleep they lie,
Nor babble of the secrets they retain
Within their rock-ribbed bosoms, ever probed by
man in vain.

Like mighty giants of some elder day,
They seem no part nor parcel of our time ;
Nor heed unto the present ever pay,
But slumber on in attitude sublime ;
Girt by their leafy beards, and capp'd with hoary
rime.

The rise and fall of empires is to them
No more than fate of yonder leaflet blown ;
They ne'er have bow'd to kingly diadem,
Nor spurned the neck of despot overthrown ;
Nor ever wept to hear the dying patriot's plain-
tive moan.

And yonder river, with its ceaseless flow
Of placid waters, rolling to the sea ;
Hath seen alike, unmoved, all human woe,
All human joy ; unmoved, hath heard for aye
The victor's cry of triumph mock the vanquished's
agony.

Or crystal pure as dew-drop at the birth ;
Or gore ensanguined from some mortal fray
Upon his banks ; or thick with clayey earth
Washed from the mountain's side ; he wends his
way.
As calmly now, as poured the flood which marked
his natal day.

Alike to him the Indian's frail canoe
Freighted with furs ; or rich with many a bale,
Our modern argosies ; or deep with woe,
The slaver's keel ; or yacht with snowy sail ;
Or steamship swift ; or warlike squadrons clad
in iron mail.

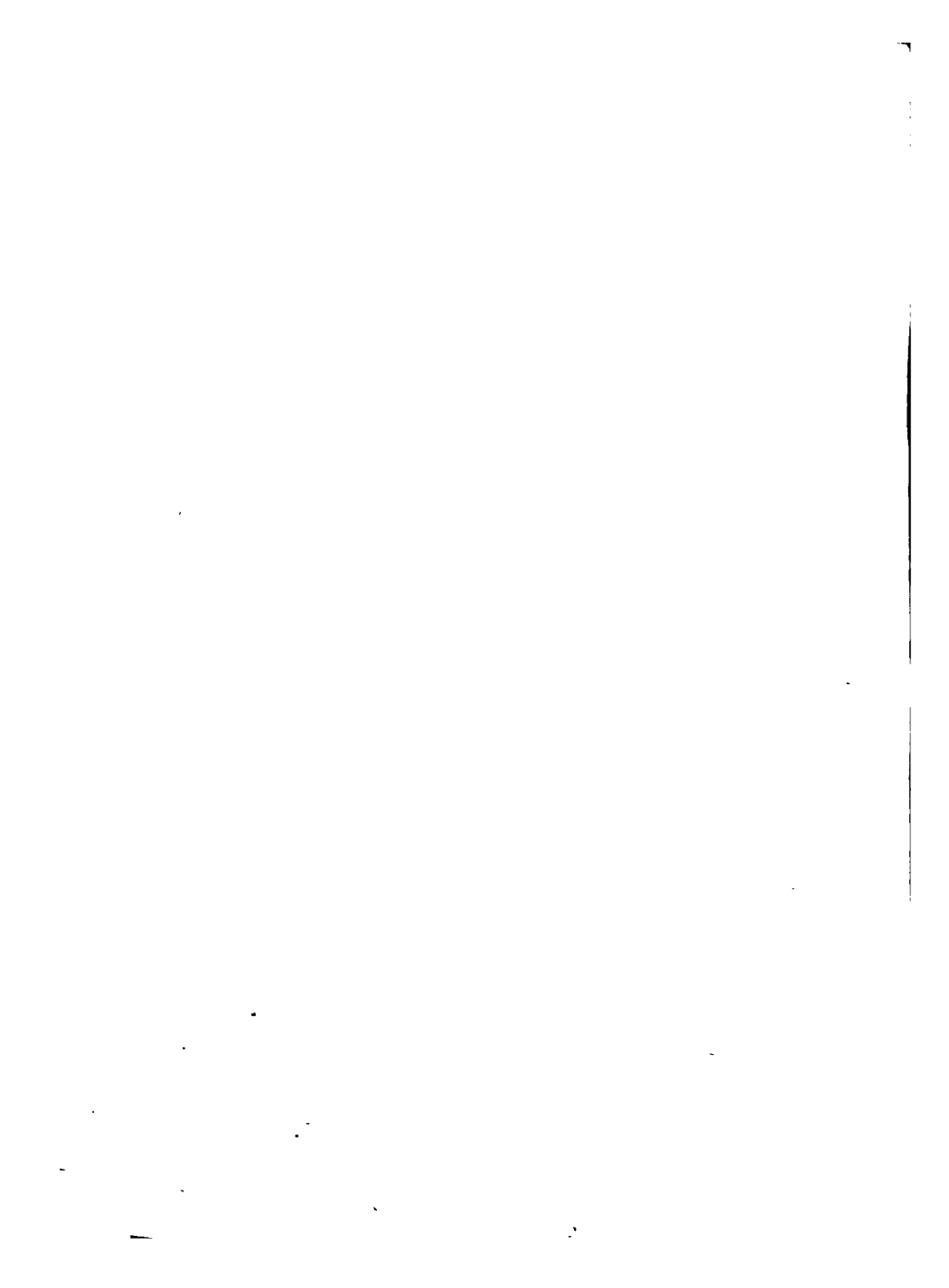
Or yet more distant in the lapse of years
His flood hath roll'd,—a long forgotten race,
Cultured and strong ; whose handiwork still bears
Mute witness,—they, like us, once filled a space
In Time's great album, but have passed, and left
but scanty trace.

We, puny offspring of degenerate loins,
Pickaxe in hand, or burrow in the earth,
Or climb the rocky steep, to scan the signs
We may not read ; to wonder o'er the birth
Of nations all unknown,—their rise,—their progress,—and their death.

And in the distant future, may not we,
Who vaunt our modern culture, modern thought,
Mouldered to dust, like them, forgotten be ;
Our very name a blank,—unknown, unsought,
Or sought in vain,—the crumbling relics that our hands have wrought ?

O ! may this thought, borne constantly in mind,
Still serve to check our pride from day to day ;—
Life is a leaf, fann'd by the passing wind
A season only, then to fade away ;
To join the myriads gone before, and share their swift decay.

THE DREAM.



THE DREAM.

ONE summer's morn I wander'd forth,
Soft blew the breezes from the south,
And plain'd the locust of the drouth
Throughout the leafy wood ;

Upon the ground the shadows slept,
Between the boughs the sunbeams crept,
Aside, the babbling brooklets wept,
Above, the turtles cooed.

My heart alone was dull as night,
But clouds and darkness met my sight,
And nowhere pierced a ray of light
To cheer my lonely way ;

The maid I loved to me was lost,
Now anguish torn, and passion toss'd,
My budding hopes all nipp'd with frost,—
Upon the ground they lay.

Aye ! Fair as false, and false as fair,
Bright golden gleam'd her wavy hair,
My heart she used it to ensnare,
And bound me foot and hand ;

Deep, dreamy, dark, her lovely eyes,
Or rose, or fell, like summer skies,
Now bidding bright Aurora rise,
Now night oppress the land.

Full tall and stately in her place,
So lithe of form and fair of face,
All tongues united in her praise,
My queenly Geraldine !

Long months before when stars were bright.
When lay the snowdrifts pure and white,
Beneath the calm moon's holy light,
She promised to be mine.

Aye, mine till death ! Yet mine no more !
Full false the plighted faith she swore,
And my poor wounded heart was sore,
My tears fell fast as rain ;

Anon I rose, in sullen mood,
And, like Orlando, when he wooed
Fair Rosalind in Arden wood,
I carv'd the false one's name.

I carv'd it on a giant oak,
Whose trunk defied the lightning's stroke,
And whose proud crown from all bespoke
The reverence his due ;

I carv'd the stately elm tree high,
I carv'd the lowly willow nigh,
The mournful cypress standing by,
The poplar and the yew.

" O oak ! thy strength is vain," I said,
" I once, like thee, the monarch play'd,
Thou soon, like me, all lowly laid,
Shalt mingle with the dust !

" O elm ! thy form is passing fair,
But false as she whose name ye bear,
Thy heart is rotten at the core,
And fall ye shortly must !

" O willow !" said I, " weeping o'er
The countless graves of those who bore
Life's sorrows, but are now no more,
Thy tears are vainly sown ;

" For they who die are freed from pain,
Not loss is theirs, but lasting gain,
The wretched only here remain
To make perpetual moan !

“ O poplar ! ” said I, “ lightly stirr’d
By every breeze, by every bird,
Thou art the type of woman’s word,
Of her whose name ye bear ;

“ For he who trusts to thee his weight
Will surely mourn disconsolate,
And, from the ground, perceive too late
That thou art false as fair !

“ O yew-tree ! ” said I, “ wherefore strive
On earth for centuries to live,
While I, tho’ young, would glad receive
My summons even now ;

“ O cypress ! ” said I, “ type of death,
In life I find but broken faith,
All hail to thee ! thy mournful wreath
Shall bind my gloomy brow ! ”

I said, and straight a garland wove
From off the cypress bough above,
Then sinking down within the grove,
I thought on her and wept ;

Anon, my spirit grew more calm,
And, chanted low, I heard a psalm
Come floating through the twilight warm.
’Twas fancy—for I slept.

I dream'd that in a cloistered nave
I stood before a pilgrim grave ;
A staff into my hand he gave,
Then vanished from my sight ;

Anon, upon a mountain nigh,
I mark'd a path ascend on high,
And lose itself within the sky,
A gloomy sky of night.

And as I mourn'd the cruel fate
Which left me thus disconsolate,
To climb alone, or lonely wait
Within an unknown land !

Behold unto my raptured sight
Appear'd an angel veil'd in white,
Who pointed upward to the height,
And led me by the hand.

Methought long days we journey'd on,
Until my strength was well-nigh gone,
My weary feet all bruised and torn,
My sad soul desolate ;

At last, beside a mossy stone,
In anguish sore, I cast me down,—
I bade my guide proceed alone,
And leave me to my fate.

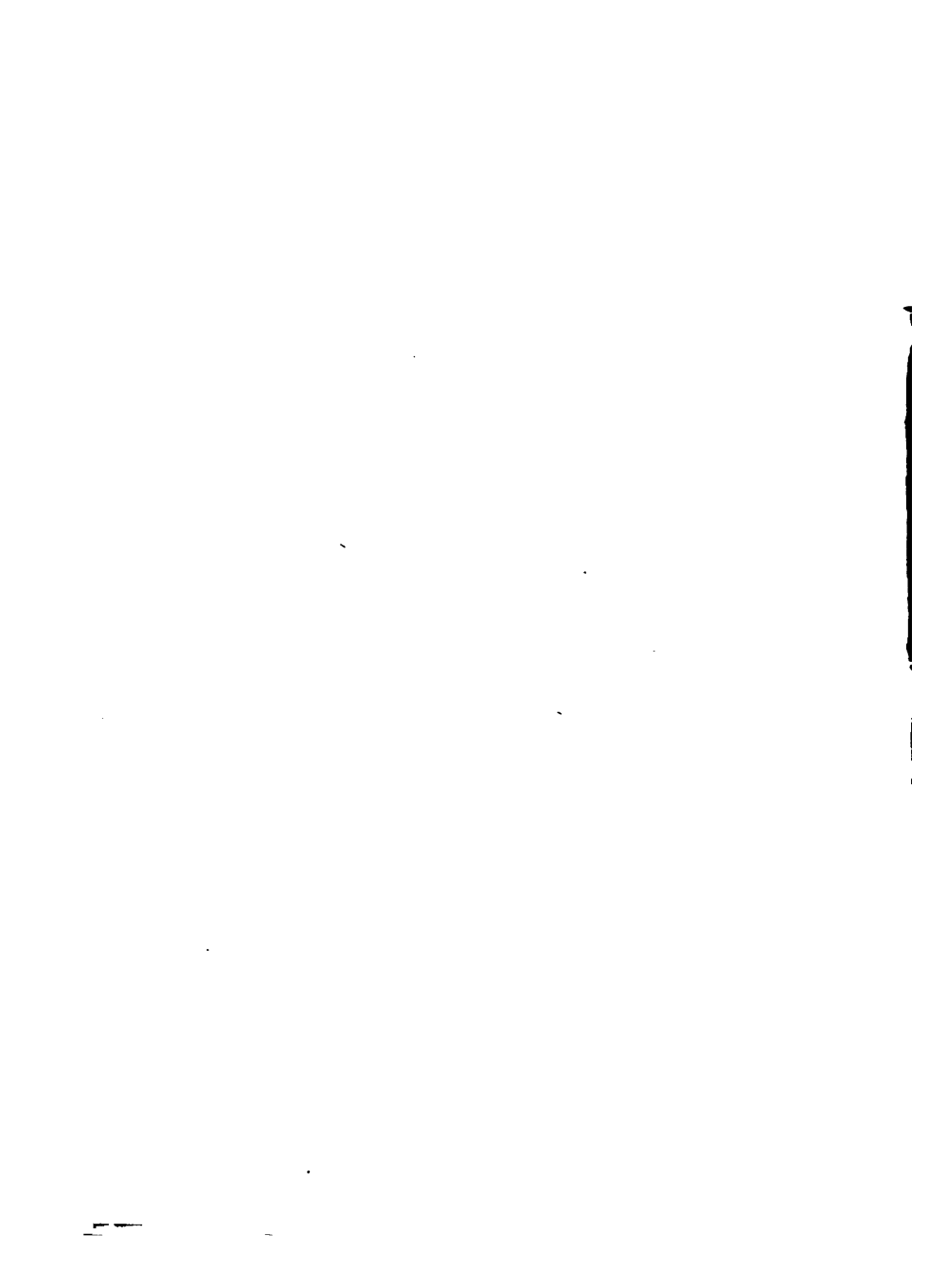
Behold ! the word no sooner said,
Than straight my beating heart, dismay'd,
Upon the angel's breast was laid,
And lightly wafted on !

We reach'd at last a level plain,
All bright with golden fields of grain,
With luscious fruits of every name,
And eloquent with song.

And now methought I sigh'd a prayer
Unto my guardian angel fair,
That she who safely brought me there
Would evermore be mine ;

When lo ! her snowy veil she raised,
My angel guide stood forth confessed ;
I woke, and clasp'd unto my breast,
My love—my Geraldine !

CUSTER'S CHARGE.



NOTE.

Upon the morning of June 25, 1876, Gen. Geo. A. Custer, of the Seventh Regiment U. S. Cavalry, was slain, together with his whole command of three hundred men, in an engagement with the Sioux Indians, under their noted chief, Sitting Bull, at the Little Horn River, Indian Territory. The battle took place under the following circumstances, so far at least as can be gleaned from such scanty reports of the affair as have reached the public ear, most of the details having been subsequently learned from Indians engaged in the battle, and who have been since taken prisoners.

General Custer and Major Reno, with twelve companies of the Seventh, were upon the day in question acting under orders to follow up the hostiles (who were surmised to be close at hand), and to ascertain so far as possible their numerical force. In furtherance of this design, Custer and Reno separated, the former taking five companies, the staff and non-commissioned staff of his regiment, together with a number of scouts; while the latter retained with him the remaining seven companies.

Shortly after this separation, General Custer discovered immediately in front, and scattered along the bottom of a rocky defile or cañon, a number of Indian lodges or "*Teepees*," and seeing the Indians apparently preparing for flight, he, with his usual impetuosity immediately ordered a charge, and, putting spurs to his horse, led the way down the valley at full gallop, closely followed by his whole command, all cheering lustily.

This defile is about a mile in length, with an average width of perhaps one hundred yards, and is bounded and enclosed upon each side by high stone ridges, or "*Hog backs*," as they are termed in that country. As the result proved, these ridges were lined upon both sides of the valley at the entrance, and for fully half its entire length, by large bodies of Indian warriors, all well armed, and in many cases with the latest improved breech-loading rifles, furnished to them

by traders and others. This valley was, in fact, a trap or ambushade, into which General Custer and his men had been purposely drawn with a view to their annihilation.

At the first volley more than half the command fell, shot down by an invisible foe, crouching behind the scattered trees and boulders which line the rocky sides of the cañon. Retreat was simply impossible, for the savages now swarmed behind the doomed men, cutting off all chance of escape in that direction. As a last resort, after vainly endeavoring for a short time to withstand the overwhelming odds to which he was opposed, Custer seems to have determined to lead the remnant of his force forward in the hope of escaping by the lower end of the valley. This attempt was made, but was apparently soon given up by the men, probably through despair of its practicability, and General Custer, upon reaching a place of comparative safety, appears to have discovered for the first time that he was alone, that his men had not followed him, while the continued firing in the direction from which he had just come told conclusively that the work of carnage was still going on. Without a moment's hesitation he turned his horse's head, seized the reins firmly in his teeth, grasped a pistol in each hand, and galloped back up the defile to perish with his comrades. It is believed that not a man of that devoted band lived to tell the tale.

General Custer's two brothers, his nephew (a young man of only nineteen years), and his sister's husband, all fell fighting by his side. When found, Custer's body lay near the top of a small hillock, while around him, within a circle of a few yards, lay the bodies of his relatives. The brief despatch sent from the field of battle two days later speaks volumes. "The whole Custer family died at the head of their column."

Shortly after the commencement of this battle Reno was engaged by another body of savages, who prevented him from rendering assistance to Custer, keeping him and his men completely surrounded in the hills for forty-eight hours without either food or water. His command would doubtless have ultimately shared the same fate as that of Custer and his force, had not relief speedily arrived.

It is a remarkable fact that while nearly all the other bodies upon

the field of battle were found horribly mutilated, that of Custer was untouched; a rare tribute of respect paid to the mortal remains of a brave man by a savage foe.

It is estimated that from 4,000 to 5,000 Indians were engaged in this battle, besides a number of squaws, who roamed the field afterward, butchering the wounded, and mutilating and despoiling the dead bodies.

General Custer left a widow, but no children. He was a bold, dashing officer, full of ardor and daring, beloved by his men and universally popular. He was born in Ohio, was a graduate of West Point, had already attracted considerable notice as a magazine writer, and was but thirty-five years of age at the time of his death.

The foregoing description of a most lamentable affair may not be in all respects absolutely accurate, having been gathered principally from the newspaper reports, but the author has every reason to believe that in the main it is so, and has founded upon it the accompanying slight tribute to the memory of a brave officer and of his equally gallant companions. The poem was written upon the spur of the first reports of the battle. Since that time many severe strictures have been passed upon General Custer for his rashness in thus risking his own life and the lives of his men. These questions the author must leave to others better versed in military matters than himself, but it is at least admitted by all that Custer died bravely *with his men*. God's law of death is a statute of repose. It were not to our credit as a nation if any petty feeling arising from General Custer's possible indiscretion or want of judgment in this matter should be allowed to mar the laurel we tender to his memory.

With the exception of the famous charge of the six hundred, at Balaklava, which in many respects this closely resembled, the whole history of modern cavalry warfare furnishes scarcely a parallel to it in its dash, daring, and disastrous consequences.

CUSTER'S CHARGE.

“COMPANIONS!” he said, “tho’ misfortune hath
found us,
Tho’ each tree and rock hides a foe from the
view;
Tho’ comrades are falling each moment around us,
To your friends, to yourselves, to your country
be true !

“On either side beetle the rocky bluffs o’er us,
Behind us grim terrors await for our breath;
But one path lies open—the valley before us—
Say, friends! dare ye ride yonder gauntlet of
death ?”

“Lo! high on the mountain crag flaps the bald
vulture,
Hark! howls the gray wolf in the thicket be-
neath;
What reck yon grim guests our refinement or cul-
ture,
They come but to feast at the banquet of death !

“ Mark, friends, how the dusky foe circle around
us,

Each rifle at rest and each knife in its sheath ;
The huntsman is hunted, and they who now hound
us

Rest not till their quarry lies steeped in his
lethe !

“ Count a gap in our ranks at each rifle's rattle,
The fall of a man at the twang of each bow ;
Say, friends ! stay we here to be slaughter'd like
cattle,

Or die we like men, with our feet to the foe ;

“ Think we first on the friends who so tenderly
love us,

Think all on death's glory, but naught on its pain ;
On the dear ones in heaven now watching above
us,—

Look each to his saddle-girths, pistols and rein !

“ Ready—charge ! ”—the steel hoofs down the
dark defile rattle ;

Swift bullets in thousands fly hurtling like hail !
Hurrah ! they are safe !—far behind lies the bat-
tle,—

Then why turns yon bold-hearted warrior pale ?

" O cowards !—O false ones !—why, why, did ye falter ? "

He cries out in anguish, with laboring breath ;

" Ah, Christ ! they have stay'd but to add to the slaughter—

They dared not ride with me the gauntlet of death ! "

Will he leave them ? One look upon mountain and valley,

For the wife of his bosom a thought and a sigh ;

One moment he hearkens the death-dealing volley,

Then spurs up the defile to rescue or die !

He is lost in the smoke,—now death's darts faster rattle ;

Where, where find a hero more worthy fame's wreath ?

Once more he hath entered the loud hell of battle,

His pistols in hand and the reins in his teeth !

'Tis vain ! The wild foe circle closer around them,

Each hero in turn lies in death on the sod ;

In that den of slaughter the grim spectre found them,—

They rest in the peace of a merciful God !

Brave Custer, we mourn thee !—yet, knowing thy
glory,

We would not recall thee again to the earth ;
Long, long shall be honored in statue and story
The man who rode back thro' the gauntlet of
death !

ODE TO NATURE.



ODE TO NATURE.

I.

FOND Nature ! Maid of heavenly birth !
Thou Protean form of changeful mood !
Now basking in the sun-lit wood,
By zephyrs fann'd, by brooklets wooed,
Now mounting high the tempest rude
To rend in rage the trembling earth !

II.

While yet a child, thy mighty form
I pictured in the rising storm ;
With breathless awe my heart was still'd,
My soul with speechless raptures thrill'd ;
I heard thy whisp'rings in the breath
Of Summer winds athwart the heath ;
Thy voice amid the angry roar
Of billows on the foamy shore.
The partridge drumming in her lair
Reveal'd thee to the list'ning air ;

The cricket's chirp, the cat bird's call,
The murm'ring hum of water-fall ;
The squirrel chatt'ring in the tree,
The rabbit on the grassy lea ;
The dun-deer in the tangled brake,
The wild-duck on the crystal lake ;
Each lowly plant, each pine-tree high
Alike proclaim'd thy presence nigh !

III.

In darksome wood or lonely glen
I wandered far from haunts of men ;
Each step disclos'd some new delight
To raptur'd ear or ravish'd sight ;
A mellow haze enshrin'd the scene
In soften'd tints and golden sheen ;
Each Iris hue stood forth display'd
In alternated light and shade,
While over all soft zephyrs play'd.
The drowsy locust hymn'd his way,
And lull'd to rest the Autumn day ;
The humming-bird and am'rous bee
Seemed match'd in friendly rivalry,
And swiftly flew from bower to bower
To woo and kiss each blushing flower.
The swallow skimm'd the glassy deep
Where countless fish lay wrapt in sleep ;
The musk-rat trailed his shining wake,
Or idly floated on the lake ;

That bird of meditative mood,
The melancholy heron, stood,
And lost in dreams forgot to slay
The finny tribes which round him lay.

IV.

A dreamy child, of thoughtful mood,
I shunn'd companions wild and rude,
And leaving oft their giddy play
To thy lov'd haunts would bend my way :
There, prone beneath some ancient tree.
Thy songsters' wild-wood minstrelsy
Still held my ears in sweet suspense
And lull'd to rest each captive sense.

V.

I mused ! I dream'd ! Anon my eyes
Saw faery forms around me rise ;
I mused ! I dream'd ! Now seemed my ears
To list the music of the spheres ;
I mused ! I dream'd ! By slow degrees
I pierced thy hidden mysteries :
My senses lull'd as in a trance,
I saw a mystic form advance
From out the wood where shadows slept,
And slanting sunbeams sidling crept.
It came ! Nor fear, but rapturous awe
Amaz'd my soul ! It came,—I saw

An angel form of heav'nly grace
And aspect mild. Her lovely face
Glow'd sweet with kindness. In her eyes
Were match'd the tints of Summer skies.
With wild-wood flowers her head was crown'd.
Her zone with leaves was circled round ;
Her arms a grateful burden bore
Of ripen'd fruits,—nor seem'd her store
To lessen, as with lavish hand
She strew'd them o'er the smiling land.

VI.

O goddess fair of wood and field !
I knew thee as thou stood'st reveal'd—
My guardian genius ! at thy feet
I knelt in reverence, as were meet.
My heart o'erflowed,—by rapture bound
My lips refus'd to utter sound ;
Nor voice was needed to express
My spirit's inmost happiness ;
I bow'd before thy presence mild,
At once thy lover, and thy child !

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

THE POET'S SOLILOQUY.

THEY call me "idle," and they say
My bank account will never thrive,
Unless I leave my poesy,
And live my life as others live.

They ask—"what use in modern times,
To modern men, are mewling bards,
Who waste their lives in matching rhymes
And idly gazing heavenwards ?

"How help these rhyming fools to fill
The shops, the marts, the factories ;
Where throng their harvests to the mill,
Or plough their ships the foaming seas ? "

'Tis true ; no warp the poet parts,
No grain at mill the poet tolls ;
Yet grinds he bread for hungry hearts,
Yet weaves he thought for famish'd souls !

Seek *gold* with vulgar crowds, forsooth !
The poet's wares cannot be bought ;
He stands the champion of the truth,
The grand conservator of thought !

The God of Nature's minstrelsy
A home the forest songster finds ;
He will provide, who wrought in me
The madness of poetic minds !

THE POET'S LAMENT.

AH, Prometheus ! thy endeavor
Shadows still this later day ;
Still are artists toiling ever,
Men to form from vulgar clay.

Still the poet, Heaven scaling,
Seeks to win celestial fire ;
Still above, the vulture, sailing,
Sees he ever circling nigher.

Still the winged steed immortal,
To the plow is helpless bound ;
Still Orpheus, at the portal,
Loses her he lately found.

Still Tantalus, thirsty ever,
Sees the mocking waters thrill ;
Still the weary roller never
Rests upon Tartarus' hill.

Still Icarus, soaring higher,
Dies beneath the burning ray ;
Still Apollo wakes the lyre,
Still he bends the bow to slay.

Still Procrustes shortens ever
Giants by a foot at least ;
Still the prison'd Milo never
'Scapes the fang of cruel beast.

THE MORNING OF LIFE.

HARK ! the perfumed waters falling,
Hark ! the love-birds softly calling ;
See the orange blossoms blowing,
See the cheek of beauty glowing ;
Look, where down the flowery lea
Flit the butterfly and bee.
Live to-day, perchance to-morrow
Cometh care, and cometh sorrow ;
Hearken to this word of warning ;
Life is brightest in the morning ;
Soon the mid-day heat will vex thee,
Soon the evening shades perplex thee.

On the morrow fails the fountain,
Fly the love-birds to the mountain ;
Faded all the orange blowing,
Blanched the cheek of beauty glowing ;
Dead, upon the trodden lea,
Lie both butterfly and bee.
Live to-day, perchance to-morrow
Cometh care, and cometh sorrow ;
Never from the future borrow
With the present still in hand.

Youth returns no more to woo thee,
Age and care will soon undo thee ;
All things here are evanescent,
Dies alike both peer and peasant ;
Hope proclaims a future pleasant,
All her promises are lies ;
Only they who grasp the present,
Only they are truly wise.
Live to-day, perchance to-morrow
Cometh care and cometh sorrow.

Pluck the rose while yet 'tis blowing,
Quaff the wine-cup while 'tis flowing ;
Woo thy love with tears and praises,
Till she yield to thy embraces ;
Only they who till the vineyard,
Only they shall taste the wine.
Live to-day, perchance to-morrow
Cometh care and cometh sorrow ;

They who from the future borrow,
They shall evermore repine.
Hearken to this word of warning,
Life is brightest in the morning ;
Soon the mid-day heat will vex thee,
Soon the evening shades perplex thee.

IN THE WILD ARKANSAS WOOD.

In the wild Arkansas wood,
'Neath the pine trees lying ;
Naught to break my solitude,
Save the zephyrs sighing ;
Save the robin's interlude,
And his mate's replying.

Far away the city's hum,
And I lonely ponder
Where the brown bear makes his home,
Where the wild deer wander ;
Leaping squirrels slyly come,
Gaze on me with wonder.

Slant the sunbeams, line on line,
Shadows interlacing ;
Moans the melancholy pine,
Branch with branch embracing ;
Faintly low the distant kine,
Homeward slowly pacing.

Mocking birds with varied notes,
Keep the wild woods ringing ;
Thrushes swell their speckled throats
In rivalry of singing ;
Blue-jays flaunt their azure coats,
Defiance at me flinging.

Modest violets, group'd around,
Look up with mild surprise ;
Bearded pansies, velvet-crown'd,
Keep watch with eager eyes.
Thus every creature on the ground,
Thus every bird that flies.

Now the shadows creep apace,
Shadows without number ;
Now the red sun hides his face
In the mountains yonder ;
Now the stillness of the place
Steeps my soul in slumber.

THE UNATTAINABLE.

In a dungeon of stone am I wall'd around,
With fetters of iron my limbs are bound ;
Vainly I seek for a ray of light,
But my eyes are wrapp'd in the pall of night.

Fain would I soar to the realms of day,
And plant my feet on the starry way ;
Fain would I pierce to the central throne,
And make my plaint to the Great Unknown.

Fain would I fathom the gloomy past,
And scatter the shadows the ages cast ;
To the outmost bounds of the future fly,
And know the decrees of Destiny.

I would probe the recesses of Nature's heart,
The breast of the universe rend apart :
I would take my stand on the highest star,
And scan the horizon near and far.

On the gates of Heaven I'd warfare wage,
And upon its battlements spend my rage ;
Nor ever I'd rest from my eager strife,
Till I knew the meaning of human life.

Till I knew the meaning of human woe,
The whence we come, the where we go ;
Till I learn'd the riddle whose answer lies
Enwrapp'd in Eternal mysteries.

Alas ! I am here,—I know no more ;
Alas ! I am bound,—I may not soar ;
Alas ! I am blind,—I cannot see ;
And the riddle of life is unread by me.

Ah ! surely my spirit shall some time know
The things which it vainly seeks for now ;
Ah ! surely this heart shall some time bide
In peace, and its yearnings be satisfied.

ALONE.

I TREAD by night the silent street
With weary moan ;
The helpless prey of all I meet,—
I'm all alone !

I scan by day the jostling crowd,
No friend I own :
No kindly voice salutes me loud,—
I'm all alone !

The winds awake the buds of spring,
The seeds are sown ;
No spring to me the breezes bring,—
I'm all alone !

Cold winter blasts the blossoms kill,
The birds are flown ;
For me the bitter blight and chill,—
I'm all alone !

I starve 'mid filthy rags and dust,
No food—no home ;
The victim of man's selfish lust,—
I'm all alone !

No voice to soothe my deep distress
With gentle tone ;
No smile to cheer my bitterness,—
I'm all alone !

No hand my fevered brow to lave,
Ere life be flown ;
No friend to lay me in the grave,—
I'm all alone !

I bear my cross in agony,
For me no crown ;
Hell's terrors wait me when I die,—
I'm all alone !

O world ! why was I ever born,
And helpless thrown,
The wretched object of thy scorn ? —
I'm all alone !

O man ! my woes are naught to thee—
My weary moan ;
Thou heedest not my misery.
I'm all alone !

O Christ ! who bless'd the Magdalene,
Thou kindly One ;
Come, bless thy erring child again,—
I'm all alone !

O God ! my cup of misery
Is overflown ;
Receive my parting soul—I die—
Here—all alone !

THE INNER LIFE.

I MINGLE with the trivial crowd,
The gayest of the gay ;
With those who laugh I laugh aloud,
I play with those who play.

But when at night I lonely lie,
And commune with my heart,
I feel 'tis all a mockery—
I only play a part.

My boon companions may not know
The secrets of my breast ;
Enough for them the idle flow
Of merriment and jest.

But deep within my hidden soul
There lies a holy place,
Where wanton footstep fears to stroll,
And Folly veils her face.

THE FRUITS OF SORROW.

THE pearl that gleams on beauty's neck,
To secret anguish owes its birth ;
The gems which grace the coronet,
Were born amid the throes of earth.

The attar which the rose distils
Proclaims the flower's sure decay ;
The forest songster ever trills
Most sweetly on his dying day.

The cruel axe must gash the wood
Before the healing gums may flow ;
And all of wise, or fair, or good,
Is sequent to some hidden woe.

"WHERE THE LORDLY HUDSON
RIVER."

WHERE the lordly Hudson river
Rolleth downward to the sea ;
There my heart abideth ever,
There my fancy wanders free ;
Ev'ry ripple on its bosom,—
Ev'ry drop is dear to me.

Where the violets are growing
'Neath the calm and stately pine ;
Where, in wavy masses flowing,
Droops the graceful mountain vine ;
Where the yellow sunbeams glowing,
Cross the shadows line on line.

Where the zephyrs, softly sighing,
Woo the gently purling rills ;
Where the forest songsters, vying,
Each a diff'rent measure trills ;
Where the echoes, low replying,
Die amid the distant hills.

Where the skies are ever changing,
And the sunlight never fails ;
Where the eyes, forever ranging,
Watch the thickly studded sails ;
At every glance exchanging
Wooded hills and grassy dales.

Where the slanting moonbeams quiver,
On the brawling mountain streams ;
Where the placid flowing river
Like a thread of silver gleams ;
O my heart is yearning ever
For those well remember'd scenes !

AFLOAT.

WITHIN a mighty circle bound,
Whose central point am I ;
A waste of waters all around,
Above—a world of sky.

I mark the lurid sun arise
Each morning from the main ;
I see him daily cross the skies
To meet the waves again.

Anon, like Aphrodite, born
Amid the sounding surge,
I watch the placid moon sail on,
And sink beneath the verge.

The glist'ning stars reflect in turn
Their glories in the deep ;
For me alone they seem to burn,
And watchful vigils keep.

The misty clouds above me lie,
And shade the watery plain ;
For me they spread their canopy,
Or melt in gentle rain.

The sighing zephyrs come and go,
To fill my flowing sail ;
For me they whisper soft and low,
Or swell the rising gale.

Swift flying fish with sudden bound
Escape some danger nigh ;
The watchful sea-gulls circle round—
The nautilus sails by.

Around me unknown forms arise,
And spouting monsters sweep ;
All hail me with their wondering eyes,—
A welcome to the deep.

'Tis well—I'll track the stormy sea
With every sail unfurled ;
These all shall my companions be,
And this, my only world.

CLARIBEL.

CLARIBEL, Claribel,
She it is that I love well ;
Chained I am as with a spell,
By a glance from Claribel !

Claribel, Claribel,
Prithee, prithee, tell, O tell !
Cruel beauty, what the spell,
Binds all hearts to Claribel ?

Claribel, Claribel,
Name to peace and joy a knell,
What the charm you use so well,
All are slaves to Claribel ?

Claribel, Claribel,
Ev'ry charm is thine at will,
Sunshine brightens hill and dell,
At a glance from Claribel !

Claribel, Claribel,
At thy name my pulses thrill,
I'd live for ages 'neath thy spell,
Dying, whisper—Claribel !

Claribel, Claribel,
She it is that I love well :
Chained I am as with a spell,
By a glance from Claribel !

THE UNIVERSAL EPITAPH.

LIFE ! Thou art bankrupt, and to me
A debtor must thou ever be.

I ran ! I thought life's prize to gain,
Of joy, with pleasure's smiling train ;
Life gave me sorrow, link'd to pain.

I fought ! Life's promised meed to win,
A robe of peace to wrap me in ;
Life brought me conscience, foul'd by sin.

I toiled ! I hoarded, bought and sold,
Grew rich in houses, lands and gold ;
Life leaves me bare six feet of mould.

I climb'd ! I sought with eager breath
Life's guerdon, Fame's immortal wreath ;
Age hurl'd me downward unto death.

I delv'd ! In Wisdom's sacred mine,
I sought her treasures to divine ;
With empty hands, I now repine.

I soar'd ! At heaven's eternal throne
My restless spirit made her moan
For light. I lie in darkness prone.

Life ! Thou art bankrupt, and to me
A debtor must thou ever be.
Fly wanton, for I plainly see
Thy smiles but mask thy treachery ;
Come Death—disclose thy stores to me.

THE MILLS OF GOD.

GOD is just ! His mills grind slowly,
Often seem they far from true ;
Yet they swerve not ; high or lowly,
Each receives at last his due.

Would ye win a worthy present
At the mills of Deity ?
Know—both peer and humble peasant
Under one dominion lie.

Would ye reap a harvest royal
When ye gain the other side ?
See that ev'ry germ is loyal,
See that every seed is tried.

Ever glow his harvests comely
Who preserves a thrifty eye ;
Empty stand the laggards only
Round the mills of Deity.

LITTLE BY LITTLE.

LITTLE by little the morning breaks,
Little by little the world awakes.

Little by little the sunbeams shine,
Little by little—line on line.

Little by little mounts the Sun,
Little by little to sultry noon.

Little by little the shadows grow,
Little by little they lengthen now.

Little by little the sun goes down,
Little by little the twilights come.

Little by little the night creeps on,
Little by little,—Life's day is done.

SERVIA.

GOD of grace ! Can these be human ?
Standing,—gazing idly on—
Tortured babes, and ravish'd women,
Burning towns, and heaps of slain !

Christ of mercy ! Are they Christian ?
Balancing within the scales—
Infants' skulls—and commerce Eastern,
Headless trunks—and Turkish bales !

England ! Is thy boasted glory
Buried 'neath the rust of peace ?
May poor Servia, torn and gory,
Sigh in vain to thee for ease ?

France ! Of old thy cross of fire
Gleam'd on dome and minaret ;
Now the crescent, mounting higher,
Marks that cross dishonor'd set !

Men of Europe ! See us bleeding,
Weary, wounded, and forlorn :
Can ye mock a brother's pleading,
Flesh of flesh, and bone of bone ?

Brothers—help us! Help—ye nations !
And our gratitude receive ;
Seek we not for higher station,
All we ask is—*leave to live !*

LINES UPON A FAGOT.

THIS fagot, dead, gives forth no light,
But friction will a spark ignite ;
And lo ! Instead of lifeless clay,
A living torch illumines the way.

Thus, tho' thy neighbor seem to lie
Enwrapp'd in sensuality,
Some latent virtue in his breast
May waken still at thy behest.

TO A LAND-BIRD AT SEA.

OFF THE COAST OF FLORIDA, APRIL 24, 1877.

WHEREFORE, O solitary one !
Hast thou forsook the shore ;
Upon the waves to wander lone,
To list the night-wind's sullen moan,
Old Ocean's mournful monotone,
The tempest's angry roar ?

Hath Earth, unhappy bird, for thee,
O'er all her ample breast ;
In flowery plain, or sheltering tree,
On mountain high, in valley free,
No spot, where thou contentedly
May bide and be at rest ?

Hast thou no mate, O faithless bird,
Who pines for thee at home ;
Whose constant heart is anguish stirr'd,
Whose plaintive voice is ever heard,
Still mourning for her absent lord
Who heedlessly doth roam ?

Or art thou, wretched bird like me,
A spirit desolate ;
With no kind breast to welcome thee,
No voice to soothe thy misery,
No home save on the stormy sea,
No friend to mourn thy fate ?

Then welcome, friendless one, we'll roam
Together o'er the wave ;
We'll bid the fiercest tempests come,
We'll plunge amid their crests of foam,
And tho' we fail to find—a home,
We'll haply find—a grave !

THE RESTLESS SPRITE.

A DEMON there is who haunts my frame,
Alike by day and by night ;
He holds mad orgies in my brain,
He causes my pulses to throb and flame,
My teeth to gnash and grind with pain,
My cheek to blanch with fright.

He comes with the first faint tinge of dawn,
He broods in the waning light ;
In vain I fly, like the startled fawn,
He follows me fast from night till morn,
Alike in sunshine, alike in storm,
From morn till the fall of night.

I hurry about from place to place,
Yet never escape his might ;
O ! when shall my weary soul find ease,
Where, where shall I seek for a resting-place ?
Ah ! When attain to blissful peace,
Peace from the restless sprite ?

LUCRECE.

“Throwing aside his assumed disguise of idiocy, and taking the dead body of Lucrece, Junius Brutus repaired to the market-place, where, brandishing aloft the fatal knife, he harangued the multitudes there assembled, and incited them to rise against the Tarquins.”—*Roman History.*

How long, Oh Romans ! will ye bow
Your necks like boughten slaves,
Unto the hated tyrant's yoke,
And tamely weep your wrongs ?
How long shall Tarquin's venom'd brood
Hold sway in Rome, and scourge
Your naked backs with scorpion whips,
And shame the Roman name ?

Behold yon beauteous, bleeding corpse !
Ye all do know it well ;
'Twas Collatine's fair bride, Lucrece !
For virtue famed through all the land ;
Acknowledg'd—“ First of Roman dames ; ”
Her soul, disdainful, dropt this robe.
Foul'd by base Tarquin's hellish lust,
And startled, winged its trembling flight
To Pluto's deepest shades ; where plunged
In purging fires, it mourns her fate,
And with loud cries for vengeance—wakes
The drowsy ear of night.

Time was when Roman's fondest boast
Was of the Roman name,
And of the Romans' deeds ;—of empires won
From barb'rous tribes ; of cities ta'en by bold as-
sault ;
And tribute laid upon a conquer'd world !
And we did vainly, vainly dream—
Our fathers' blood still circled thro' our veins,
And hoped on untried fields to emulate their fame !

Vain dream ! Vain hope ! your fathers' glaives
Hang rusting on your walls ;
Your shields are dentless, save the scars
Sustain'd when borne by them ;
Their armor weighs you down ;
Your puny limbs refuse the weight
'Twas joy to them to bear,
And your bent brows no more uphold
The Mural crown for which they strove ;
But lap'd in baleful luxury and ease,
Glory forgot, ye sleep a deadly sleep,
Nor dream that—*ye are slaves !*

But hark ! Whose voice ? Who cried—
“ We are not *slaves*, but *Romans* still ! ” ?
Who shouted “ Vengeance on the tyrant crew ! ” ?
Romans, awake ! Your fathers' blood
Still warms your veins, their martial fire
Still prompts to daring deeds !

Then circle round this bier, draw their good
swords,

And on them swear—that Rome shall yet be free !

O ! Thou Eternal Jove ! who sit'st in state

On high Olympus' topmost peak ;

And from thy lofty throne dost scan

The confines of the world ;

O ! ye immortal shades of our dead sires,

Companions of the gods ! Thou Sun !

Who light'st the day by Jove's decree ;

And all ye shining heav'nly host,

Look down, and hear us swear,—

E'en on our fathers' swords,—

And on this gory knife, fresh plucked from Lucrece'
side,

That Tarquin ne'er again shall enter Rome !

DIVES AND LAZARUS.

How unequally apportioned

Appear the things of earth ;

By no design proportioned

Save accident or birth.

Proud Insolence, in purple,

Makes ragged Merit wait ;

And Dives, in his chariot,

Sees Lazarus at the gate.

It may be—error blinded,
We fail to see aright ;
The contest looks unequal,
And Right seems linked to Might.

Yet in the distant future,
May come reverse of fate ;
And Lazarus, in the chariot,
Sees Dives at the gate.

THE SEA.

NEW ORLEANS TO NEW YORK, APRIL 23, 1877.

THE sea, the sea, the boundless sea,
I love its waters wild and free ;
With its crested waves, and its heaving swells ;
With its secret caves, and its pearly shells ;
With its mournful moan, and its mystery ;
O, a life on the ocean wave for me !

The sea, the sea, the boundless sea,
I love its waters wild and free ;
With its wreaths of foam, and its jets of spray,
Where the sea-gulls roam and the dolphins play ;
With its ceaseless rhyme, and its melody,
O, a life on the ocean wave for me !

The sea, the sea, the boundless sea,
I love its waters wild and free ;
With its bracing air, and its distant verge ;
With its breezes fair, and its trackless surge ;
With its merry hum, and its minstrelsy,
O, a life on the ocean wave for me !

The sea, the sea, the boundless sea,
I love its waters wild and free ;
With its angry roars, and its sweeping gales ;
With its broken spars, and its tatter'd sails ;
Aye—with all its tears, and its misery,
O, a life on the ocean wave for me !

"MULTUM IN PARVO."

To an unknown fair lady, upon presenting her with a hair-pin
found on the floor at a "Ladies' Fair," Christmas, 1872.

ACCEPT, fair maid, this trifling gift,
And treasure it with jealous care,
Till Time, the thief, with ruthless hand
Shall filch thy wealth of golden hair.

Then thou in turn wilt rob the dead,
And cheat the ever ravening worm ;
Thy tresses now are turned to gold,
Thy gold will then to tresses turn.

Tho' aged and withered, youthful grace
Thou'lt still affect 'neath "borrowed plumes,"
And flaunt them as thine own, while cold
Their owner lies amidst the tombs.

Refuse not then this trifling gift,
Nor let disdain o'ercloud thy face ;
'Twill serve in future years to keep
Thy purchased honors in their place.

LIFE AND DEATH.

AND this is life !
To daily tread
A daily round
For daily bread ;
Then rot,
Forgot,
'Midst countless dead !

And this is death !
On Nature's breast
To sink to rest
In slumber blest ;
Nor tear,
Nor fear,
To mar thy rest !

THE OLIVE BRANCH.

Lines addressed to a coquette upon hearing her sing, to music, a song composed by the author.

I.

OF old—the Patriarch, to seek
The wished-for land, despatched a dove,
Who soon returned,—within his beak
The olive-branch of kindly love.

Again sent forth, the weary bird
No more return'd,—but booming loud,
Against the shore, the waves were heard
While burned the bow upon the cloud.

Anon—our cruel fathers strove
The feathered nations to decrease ;
They took the olive-branch of love,
And shaped it like the bow of peace.

The fickle shaft,—beneath, above,
Or either side,—still wing'd its flight,
Until they robbed the gentle dove,
And tipped it with his plumage bright.

II.

I saw thee,—deem'd thee kind—as fair ;
I came, as came of old the dove ;
I brought my all,—a tribute rare
To thee,—the olive branch of love.

Beguil'd, I spent my foolish days
To watch the shining Iris rise ;
Or mark him pale his burning rays
Within the Heaven of thine eyes.

Too late, I find my pilfered wing
No more responds my weight beneath ;
The olive branch of love I bring,
By thee is turn'd a bow of death.

Thou cruel huntress ! bent on ill,
Since tipp'd thy shaft with plume of mine ;
I prithee—henceforth try thy skill
Upon the hearts of other men !

THE SUICIDE.

CEASE, thou mocking demon,—leave me !
Wherefore shouldst thou tempt me so ?
With thy ghostly finger ever
Pointing to the river's flow ;
Where the slanting moonbeams quiver,
And the shadows come and go !

O, my soul is bowed with anguish,
And my heart is rent with pain ;
All the fever steeds of madness
Charge in squadrons thro' my brain ;
Never more shall joy or gladness,
Win from me a smile again !

Not one ray of hope falls ever
On my pathway cold and bare ;
I am girt with bitter sorrow,
I am flank'd by grim despair ;
And I dread each coming morrow
With its cruel load of care !

I have sinn'd—thou sayest truly !
Fain would I the wrong undo ;
But my crimes are piled to Heaven,
Rooted deep in Hell below ;
Would to God ! 'twere kindly given,
Death should ease me of my woe !

What is life, that I should linger ?
What is death, that I should shun ?
Tho' my years should reach the limit
Of man's days beneath the sun ;
Looking back, 'twere scarce a minute,
Ere their sands have ceased to run !

Death is king ! Alike he cometh
To the coward and the brave ;
Death is king ! Alike he standeth
On the earth and on the wave ;
Death is king ! Alike commandeth
He, the monarch and the slave !

Wherefore live ? Is life so lovely,
With its daily dower of strife ?
Dreams of joy accomplished never,
Disappointment always rife ;—
Tho' the heart beat on forever,
Mere existence is not life !

Welcome then, thou silent river,
With thy darkly placid flow ;
Where the slanting moonbeams quiver,
Where the shadows come and go ;
Fare thee well, O World ; forever ;
Death shall ease me of my woe !

THE LOVER'S ORDEAL.

I'VE somewhere read in ancient story
Of a Moorish knight and lady fair ;
He—the first in martial glory,
Charming she, beyond compare.

He had loved her long and vainly,
More than all the world beside ;
But the haughty maiden plainly
Scorned him in her wilful pride.

Passing once, in dead of winter,
Where a foaming river ran ;
Quoth the Donna del La Minta,
To Count Miguel of Cuzan.

“ Count ! Your courage is undoubted
In the thickest of the fray ;
Whene'er a foe is to be routed,
You are sure to lead the way.

“ Notwithstanding, still I wonder,
Would you dare to brave the din
Of yon torrent's deafening thunder,
If I bid you enter in ?

“ Come, Sir Knight, all danger spurning,
Leap your horse into the flood ;
If, in truth, with love you're burning,
Faith, the bath will do you good.”

Upon the word, the knight sprang over,
In greaves and corselet all bedight ;
By my troth ! no modern lover
Would put himself in such a plight.

Battling with the billows roaring,
Girt by floating ice and snow ;
To the maid of his adoring
Cried this mail-clad Romeo.

“ Lady, tho’ the frozen torrent
Chill with more than Arctic cold ;
Love, unquench’d, in fiery current
Burns me ever, as of old.

“ Winter’s snowy robe may cover
Etna’s rage or Hecla’s glow ;
But the heart of faithful lover
Mocks the river’s icy flow.”

’Tis said the maid, at last relenting,
Bade him bring his horse to land ;
And, of her cruelty repenting,
Paid the Count with heart and hand.

Thus runs this old heroic story
Of the knight who braved the tide ;
Had I been he—that maiden surely,
A maiden still had lived and died.

HEROES OF '76.

THEY were faithful, steadfast, loyal,
To their country's sacred trust ;
British gold, or bay'nets royal,
Valued they no more than dust.

Faithful through the roar of battle ;
Steadfast in the hour of peace ;
Loyal, till Death's warning rattle
Spake each spirit's glad release.

Lost to life, but linked to glory !
Time, nor change, shall mar their fame ;
Lives in song each oft-told story,
Lives in brass each well-known name !

Rest ! Rest in peace, ye martyr'd dead !
In marble tomb, or mossy grave ;
And reck not of the sordid brood
Who rob the land ye died to save !

Hide, Liberty, thy pallid face !
Columbia, veil thy burning brow !
The halls those patriots erst did pace
Are trod by knaves and hucksters now !

Why ? Why should Freedom's sacred sod
Give root to such a recreant race ?
Up ! Up ! For Liberty and God !
And hurl each miscreant from his place !

SKATING GLEE.

HAND in hand we merrily go,
Over the river so dark below ;
Gliding, sliding,
Nowhere biding,—
Hand in hand we go !
Ho ! ho ! merrily go,
Hand in hand, hand in hand ;
Eyes so bright, hearts so light,—
Hand in hand we go !

Hand in hand we merrily go,
Over the river of life below :
Gliding, sliding,
Nowhere biding,—
Hand in hand we go !
Ho ! ho ! merrily go,
Hand in hand, hand in hand ;
Eyes so bright, hearts so light,—
Hand in hand we go !

CUPID'S MISSION.

'Tis said, fair maid, that at thy birth,
Bright Venus sent young Cupid down
In care of Time, to slay the child
Whose rumored charms outvied her own.

She dressed the young god in his best,
And furnished him with bow and darts ;
Then, cautioned to return with haste,
Right merrily—the boy departs.

She little dreamed that aught of earth
Could tempt him from celestial things ;
But thou hast snared him with a smile,
While Time, the thief, has stolen his wings.

Time, thus equipped, makes double speed,
And blithely turns his tireless glass,
But cruel Cupid, from thine eyes,
Doth wound poor mortals as they pass.

'Tis whispered *thou* the wound canst heal,
Which Cupid gives with venom'd dart ;
If so, kind maid, I crave thy skill,
His arrow rankles in *my* heart.

SPARKS FROM THE ANVIL.

SILENCE.

IN silence lurks a majesty
To which all sound a mockery is ;
The dignity of Deity
Is link'd to endless silences.

PURITY.

The crystal drop, shed pure at birth,
Will not contaminated lie ;
It seeks a higher life than earth,—
Its native Iris in the sky.

MORALITY.

Who vows no honest people live
At least proclaims *himself* a knave.

NOBILITY.

Equal born from mother Earth,
Type of *true* gentility,
Find we not in place nor birth,
But in mind's nobility.

NEW YEAR'S EVE.

"REX MORTUUS EST; VIVAT REX!"

Hark ! the bells in mournful numbers
Tolling forth the midnight hour ;
 Tolling, tolling, tolling, tolling,
 Tolling from the ivied tower ;
Telling of the Old Year dying,
Dying, dying, dying, dying,
 Dying at the midnight hour.

Hark ! the organ's mournful music
Swelling on the burdened air ;
 Swelling, swelling, swelling, swelling,
 Requiems for the dying year ;
Filling all the soul with sadness,
Rising, falling, swelling, dying,
 Calling mortals unto prayer.

Hark ! the rhythm of the voices,
Falling sadly on the ear ;
 Mourning, mourning, mourning, mourning,
 Chanting to the dying year
Symphonies of mournful measure—
Slowly, solemnly, mournfully chanting
 Farewells to the dying year.

Hark ! they change—the bells are pealing,
Pealing forth the midnight hour ;
 Pealing, pealing, pealing, pealing,
 Pealing from the ivied tower ;
Telling of the New Year living,
Living, living, living, living,
 Living at the midnight hour.

Hark ! the organ's joyous music
Swelling on the buoyant air ;
 Swelling, swelling, swelling, swelling,
 Welcomes to the glad New Year ;
Filling all the soul with gladness,
Rising, falling, swelling, pealing,
 Calling men to praise and prayer.

Hark ! the rhythm of the voices
Falls in raptures on the ear ;
 Echoing, echoing, echoing, echoing,
 Chanting to the glad New Year
Symphonies of joyous measure—
Joyfully, cheerily, merrily chanting
 Welcomes to the glad New Year.

Join, my soul, the joyful chorus !
Add thy mite of grateful praise ;
 Praising, praising, praising, praising,
 Praising God for lengthened days ;
Of Him who crowns the year with gladness,
Joyfully to mortals telling
 All His goodness, all His grace.

FABLES.

THE BLIND OWL.

UPON a high and windy tower,
Which hard beside the roadway lay ;
An ancient owl, of wit and power,
Dozed peacefully from day to day.

An owl he was of high degree,
His larder with the best was lined,
His fame for sage philosophy
Was wide, and yet the bird was blind.

When'er he took the morning air,
Or sniff'd the breezes of the night ;
On mountain high, in valley fair,
He walked by faith, and not by sight.

This matter troubl'd him alone,—
If only he could means devise
To make his senses left, atone
The frailty of his absent eyes.

At last he hit upon a plan
Which smack'd at least of novelty,
'Twas simply this—whenever man,
Or beast, or bird should pass that way—

He straight from off his windy tower,
Which gave him fair security,
Should hail each one as "Black-a-moor!"
Then listen if they made reply.

It chanc'd, that on this very morn,
The squire and his friends were bound
To hunt the fox, and blast of horn
Soon mingled with the cry of hound.

The fox came first. With hungry eye
He mark'd the owl upon the tower,
Who in his turn set up a cry
And shouted loudly—"Black-a-moor!"

Sly Reynard growl'd a sharp reply,
Then went his way with aspect sour;
"It is the barnyard enemy."
Observed the owl upon the tower.

Next came the restless, eager hounds,
All baying loud the scent along;
"Ah! These are dogs,—I know the sound,"—
Remark'd the owl, and held his tongue.

Next came a blooming maiden fair,
Upon a horse of speed and power;
Amazed, the lady hears the air
Resound with cries of "Black-a-moor!"

Her mirthful laughter soon repaid
The listening owl upon the tower ;
“ A merry, winsome, charming maid !
I’m bound,” cried he, “ no Black-a-moor ! ”

Next came the squire, with his crowd
Of sporting friends, at least a score ;
The owl, alert, sang clear and loud—
“ Black-a-moor, Black-a-moor, moor, moor ! ”

A jovial laugh, quick circling round,
Soon ended in a general roar ;
“ A jolly crowd, I judge by sound,”
Said owl, “ not one a Black-a-moor ! ”

At last a sooty African
Came strolling idly by the tower ;
The owl, intent upon his plan,
Saluted him with—“ Black-a-moor ! ”

Enrag’d at being called a name
Which match’d so well his brow of night ;
The wretched boor took deadly aim,
And shot the owl, who in affright

Ask’d—wherefore *he* avenged a word
Which others all with laughter bore ;
“ Because,” said he, “ thou foolish bird
Didst call me *truly* ‘ Black-a-moor ’ ! ”

APPLICATION.

Unfounded squibs 'tis safe to crack,
These scarcely will a friend estrange,
But ere unpleasant *truths* you speak
Make sure that you are out of range.

THE TEMPTED DERVISE.

AN Eastern caliph, desiring to test
The virtue of a certain holy priest,
Or Dervise (thus at least the stories tell),
Sent women, nightly, to the good man's cell.
The Dervise, cased in sanctity of heart,
Saw each approach, and each in turn depart.
He barr'd his door, and from the casement nigh,
Would read them many a bitter homily,
And swore by Mahmoud's beard "he ne'er had
seen

Women so brazen, homely, nor so lean."
At last one came,—a very sylph in grace,
A nymph in form, a houri in face ;—
The Dervise saw, and stood entranced, amaz'd,
Now called on Allah, now Mahomet praised ;
Each time he look'd, his weakness he upbraided,
Each time he look'd, he more uncertain stood ;
At last quoth he—"I now am quite persuaded
The voice of Nature is the voice of God."

THE DERVISE AND THE DWARF.

A DERVISE, stalwart, but of temper mild,
While traveling thro' a stern and rugged wild,
O'ertook a puny dwarf, of visage lean,
Of servile bearing, and most abject mien.
They journeyed on in friendly intercourse,
And reached a stream, which both essayed to cross.
The hardy Dervise gained the further side,
The wretched dwarf, swept downward by the tide,
Had surely perished, but for helping hand
His comrade lent, to bear him safe to land.
Removed—the terrors of impending death,
The crafty elf, with hypocritic breath,
Extolled his rescuer to the listening air,
And quite o'erpowered him with speeches fair.
So vaped he of—" beauty, grace, and strength—
The Dervise ask'd him suddenly at length—
How long he thought his gratitude would last ;
" Why truly," said the dwarf, " until is pass'd
A ford beyond, more perilous by far,
Than that which late appall'd me with its roar."

HUMOROUS POEMS.



PLATONIC PHILOSOPHY.

The Greek philosopher Plato is said to have advocated the theory that each soul at birth (whether male or female) is but the half of a perfect whole, and as such is doomed to wander in solitude and isolation through an infinity of successive existences until it shall finally meet and unite with its own proper and divinely appointed companion.

By the system Platonic
 (Tho' it seems rather comic)
Each soul is a half cut asunder by fate ;
 Condemned to go sighing,
 And crying, and prying,
Until, by some chance, it shall meet with its mate.

 If you halve a tomato,
 A pear, or potato,
The halves will match neatly again when they're
 joined ;
 But if you should grapple
 Either one to an apple,
The point of connection were surely defin'd.

Apart from me riven
By cruel fate driven,
My other half wanders alone o'er the earth ;
If any should meet her
I wish they would greet her
And say that I've sought her in vain from my birth.

EVOLUTION AND INVOLUTION.

A LEARNED scientist, with great resolution,
Has propounded the theory of man's evolution ;
" With a jelly-like substance his structure began,
Then—a monad,—a monkey,—and finally—MAN."

Here, in brief, is a chart of all human progression,
But what are the chances of man's retrogression ?
If he sprang from a monkey, then 'tis certainly plain
He, in time, may return to that *status* again.

Apply the same rule, and we know to our sorrow,
That monkeys to-day, may be monads to-morrow ;
And, this axiom granted, why—we very soon learn—
That monads—to jelly, may shortly return.

Now, so many "*man-monkeys*" we everywhere see
Who disgrace, e'en that branch of their family-tree ;
'Tis quite startling to think on—how very soon—
really,
These may *wiggle*—as monads,—or *quiver*—as jelly.

EPITAPH ON JACK NEVILLE.

HERE lies the body of Jonathan Neville,
Who bowed to the Lord and bobbed to the devil :
Between the two, he has hedged so well,
If he fails of Heaven, he's sure of H-ll.

THAT BABY.

It was born, it was washed, it was weighed, it was
fed,
It was diapered, bandaged, and put into bed ;
It was carried, and wheeled, it was cradled and
rock'd,
It was ribbon'd, and laced, it was booted, and
sock'd ;
It was church'd, it was sponsor'd, and sprinkled,
and named,
It was talked, it was published, and preached, and
proclaimed ;
It was looked at, and wondered at, praised and
admired,
It was played with, and dandled, until it was tired :
It was fondled and flattered, and kissed and caress'd,
It was toasted and written, pray'd over and bless'd ;
It was doctored and dosed, it was potioned and pill'd,
It was taken such care of, that at last it was killed.

INDIAN LADDER.

CARE eschewing, merry-hearted,
We, a blithesome party, started
Bright and early on a morning in the leafy month
 of June ;
Bound to climb the " Indian ladder,"
Health and happiness to gather,
Where the rock-embattled Helderbergs thro' hazy
 distance loom.

'Mongst the ladies (counting seven),
There were weights and waists uneven,
There were eyes of starry midnight, and of soft,
 celestial blue ;
There were tresses black as raven,
There were locks of golden levin,
There were lips like ripened cherries under brows
 of driven snow.

* * * * * *

O ! the puffing and the sweating,
O ! the scrambling and the getting,
O ! the scratching sand and gravel up such steep,
 inclined planes ;
O ! the laws of gravitation,
O ! the pull-backs, now in fashion,
O ! the tiny " number sixes " on the feet that called
 for " tens."

But at last our toil was over,
Man and wife, and maid and lover,
By dint of great exertion mounted safely to the top ;
By the mountain lake reclining,
We resigned ourselves to dining,
And the scientific question :—" Why don't ——'s
"torpedoes" * *pop* ?

Well, the " spread " was " just tremendous,"
And we prayed that Heaven would send us,
Each the appetite of cormorant, with the throat of a
giraffe ;
We gormandized and feasted,
Till our stomachs all protested,
" They must strike for higher wages if we didn't
soon leave off."

When the meal was at an ending,
It was really quite heartrending
To see the piteous efforts made to rise, by all
around ;
As each one in turn upstarted,
Every waistcoat button parted,—
And e'en the *leanest* of the party *had to roll along*
the ground.

* Bottles of wine.

And the ladies ; well I trembled,
Just to see how they dissembled,
Each pretending that her dinner “ was really hardly
worth the name ; ”

O ! like Eve, their mother subtle,
They would ever eat the apple,
Then the *core* they'd give to Adam, and make *him*
bear all the blame.

O ! the walking and the rowing,
O ! the billing and the cooing,
O ! the countless empty bottles floating wildly on
the lake ;
O ! the jolly drive returning—
But how strange it was next morning,
To hear each one complaining, “ *I've an awful
stomach-ache !* ”

THE NIGGER MEETIN'.

Now, brederin an' sisters, de singin' bein' done,
I'se trubble Brudder Johnsen jest ter pass de hat
aroun' ;
An' youse please not disremember, w'en you drops
de money in,
Dat de Lord ain't usin' buttens, nor a needin' bits
ob tin.

We is tole in dis yere Bible dat we shouldn't neber fail
Ter store our gold and silber where de morf cannot assail;
But dere ain't no obserwashun, dat I hab ebber foun'
'Bout stowin' worn out buttens w'en de hat's agoin' roun'.
Dere ain't no use a tryin', fr'en's, to cheat de mi'ty Lord,
So, brudder, please to pass de hat, while I expoun' de Word.

Now, 'bout dis yer elecshun, fr'en's, I'se got a word ter say,
Do' I'se rarder be a tellin' ob de *grate* elecshun day!
W'en de flocks will all be gaddered from de nations far and wide,
De sheep upon de right han', an de goats de oder side;
W'en de sheep shall soar to Hebben wid dere wool all clean an' wite,
An' de goats, all unforgibben, shall be banished from de sight;
W'en de angels all assembled in de shining courts above,—
De Lord will fix his eye upon dat nigger by de stove,

An' say—" Jim Moses, you is doomed ter eberlast-
in' woe
For puttin' buttens in de hat w'en you was down
below."

De Lord's no politishun, an' don't hold to needer
side,
But I'se say ter dem dat's t'inkin' *dis yere* nigger's
tongue is tied,—
Dere's a heap ob people gettin' rich jest alettin' ob
alone
All de oder people's business an' attendin' ter dere
own.
For youse can't begin ter hoe yer row, an' keep de
cotten free,
If youse constantly a watchin' ob a possum up a tree ;
An' do' everterly yer should dat self-same possum
skin,
Yet de bolls ul like be sheddin' fore de cotten's
gaddered in.
Dere ain't no use a sayin', fr'en's, you'se rarder
hunt dan hoe,
You'se make a heap more money jest a stickin' ter
yer row.

Now, de Debble's mi'ty crafty w'en he's huntin' ob
his prey,
An' he nebber take a wite man w'en a nigger's in
de way ;

For do' de fust, yer see, by grace, may *chance* ter
win de sky,
De Lord hab marked de culler'd race a mark ter
know dem by,
An' wile ole Saten, eny day, a wite man's soul
may steal,
It's most a monf ob Sundays 'fore he gets a culler'd
meal.
So take my 'dvice, belubbed fr'en's, an' w'en he's
kite'n roun'
Jest pray unto de bressed Lord, an' nebber look
aroun'.
De Debble eber chuckles w'en a nigger leabes his row,
An' w'en he takes to polytics, he books him down
below.

Dere was once, belubbed yeerers, in a berry deep
lagoon,
A monster alligator dat was cunnin' as a coon ;
But bein' mortal lazy, he got so berry thin,
Dat his fr'en's at last persuaded him to call de doc-
tor in.
Well, de doctor came an' felt his pulse, an' sed he'd
better take
A little debbled nigger for his preshus stomach's
sake ;
An' de alligator, not'ing loth, begun ter try an' t'ink
How ter catch sum little niggers dat was playin'
near de brink ;

So berry soon he 'costed dem, an' in a 'umble
voice,
Sed he'd like to hab de honer fur ter ferry dem
across.

Now dem niggers, feelin' flatter'd, dey in conse-
quence was weak,
So dey quite forgot how strange it was ter hear de
critter speak,
An' at last was quite persuaded dey would like ter
take a ride
Upon dat alligator's back unto de oder side.
Dem foolish niggers once afloat soon knew de cruel
sell ;
De critter call'd hisself a boat, but prob'd a dibeing
bell.
De angry waters closed above dem little niggers'
woe,
An' de alligator fattened on dere corpses down be-
low.
Dem simple darkeys lost dere libes tru' listenin'
flattery,
An' dus de Debble eber thribes by foolish nigger's
vanity.

Now, fr'en's, *de applicashun*, an' I reckon I is
done,
It is dis, belubbed yeerers,—jest "let well enuf
alone."

Ef by holdin' fast unto de bank you'se can keep
yerselves afloat,
Don't go paddlin' on de ribber in a questionable
boat.
Ef wid only corn an' baken yer makes out ter pay
yer way,
Don't go cravin' chicken fixin's an' fried possum
every day.
Ef de plow's yer true posishun, dat's assi'ned ter
yer by fate,
Don't turn a politishun, an' go stumpin' ob de
State;
An' w'en some wily flat'rer would try ter gain yer
wote,
Jest t'ink ob dem poor niggers on dat alligator
boat.

FEEJEE ISLAND.

THERE'S a curious island—'way out in the sea,
Which goes by the name of "The isle of Feejee,"
Where the good people all are so highly genteel,
They are frigid as icebergs and polished as steel;
And each one is possessed with a proper ambition
To consort with no other 'neath his own condition.

Thus the street-cleaner, knee-deep in mud at his
toil,
Will not speak to the cart-man, who carries night-soil;

And the newsboy, who sells you the five cent
gazette,
Won't be seen with the orange-boy, "three for a
bit:"

And the orange-boy, mindful of place in his turn,
Affects not to notice—"Shine, five cents a shine."
While Mrs. Greengrocer says, "Ah! you forget,
Mrs. B.'s husband's a butcher, she's not in our
set;"

And Mrs. B., smiling, "Why, who ever heard?
What!—me call on a cobbler's wife? Well, that is
absurd!"

And Mrs. Dry-goods-man says, "Oh! I'm afeard
My gals 'ull grow vulger before they is reered,
For them coal-dealer's children 'ull larn 'em to speak
Sech barb'rus English, 'sted of Laten an Greek."

Where the wife of the lawyer, in satin and lace,
Despises the shop girl's one calico dress;
And the minister's wife, in her rich purple gown,
Looks with scorn on the seamstress all faded and
brown,

Where, in truth, one and all, like the Hebrews of
old,

Ever fall down and worship the calf made of gold
Such very strange customs prevail in "Feejee,"
This curious island—'way out in the sea.

In this curious island, if the truth must be told,
The roads to distinction are all paved with gold;
And "King Midas," exultant, forever uprears
A head, void of brains, but with wonderful ears;
He's the cultured and noble, and he shall be first
Who has got the "*spondulex*" and comes down
with the "*dust*."

The results of this passion are everywhere seen,
For the highest and lowest, the fat and the lean,
Priest, deacon and sexton, the young and the old,
Are running a race for a sweepstakes of gold;

They tug and they strain from their birth till their death,

Nor give up the race till they give up their breath.

At the start, at the goal, are two different things—

Then, an ox at the plow ; *now*, an eagle with wings :

Then a “noodle,” a “lumex,” a “fool,” or a “fright,”

Now, a “marvel of wit” or an “angel of light ;”

Then, a creature to frown at, to spit on, and scorn,

Now, a potentate mighty, to flatter and fawn.

A carriage and horses, a mansion of stone,

A legion of servants, a place out of town ;

In some fashionable church a magnificent seat,

Periodical dinners, with plenty to eat ;

A box at the opera, a wardrobe immense,

Will ensure the respect that is due to a prince ;

But if any one fail to attain to this level,

He may take his departure and—“go to the devil.”

Such very strange customs prevail in “Feejee,”

This curious island—’way out in the sea.

In our studies of nature, we wondering learn,

That a butterfly bright, from a maggot is born ;

But more wonderful far is the change that takes place

Between the beginning and end of this race,

Which is constantly run in "the isle of Feejee,"
This curious island—'way out in the sea.
Thus the milkman, grown rich, will new honors
attain,
And through peddling skim milk, becomes "*crème
de la crème.*"
Thus a cobbler with money, when shaven and
clean,
Is flattered and courted and classed "*Upper
ten.*"
Thus the tailor, who cross-legged once sat at his
board,
Now wealthy, is "buttoned" for a shake and a
word.
Thus the boot-black, who, "shining," to opulence
rose,
Now outshines all the rest in magnificent clothes.
Thus the hod-man, who mounted the ladder of
old,
Now mounts to a carriage with bearings of gold.
Thus the man who "fresh peanuts" once roasted
and vended,
Now walks past his old corner by lackeys attended.
Thus "Michael," the ditcher, having shouldered his
spade,
Is a Colonel, full-fledged, and appears on parade.
Thus "Cavanagh" (Patrick), of the stevedore
clan,
Is now "Monsieur Cavana—*such an elegant man,*"

While "Muggins," the barber, having laid down
his hone,
Becomes "Senor Magona, the Italian *bon ton*."
Thus Dives e'er fattens in splendor and state,
While Lazarus starves with the curs at the gate—
Such very strange customs prevail in "Feejee,"
This curious island—'way out in the sea.

If to visit this island should be your intention,
The following facts should receive due attention :
Though the people may strike you as vulgar and
rude,
Yet they pride themselves highly on their "*old
Feejean blood* ; "
And the line of their pedigrees manage to climb,
In some *few* cases, clear back to their grandfather's
time ;
But if they should happen so high to ascend,
They take good care not to mention the "*wax*" at
the end.
If you chance on a lady "Feejean" to call,
And are poor, she'll try hard to make you feel
small,
By remarking " some people became so intrusive ;
Do you know, *Our Feejean society is very exclu-
sive ?* "
But if you are rich, she will bow, and she'll
cringe,
As tho' every vertebra worked on a hinge.

It boots not to them *how* your wealth was attained.
The question is only—has it with you remained ?
If a blackleg, a gambler, a pimp, or a thief,
Just cover your character thick with *gold leaf*,
Tho' your sins be as scarlet, the " Feejeeans " will
vow,

If you've only got money, you're as spotless as
snow.

The bankrupt, who keeps a brown stone o'er his
head,

The defaulter, who robs the poor widow of
bread ;

The Statesman, who plunders the funds of the
State,

The lobbyist, purchasing fraudulent votes—
Any rogue, who can manage his spoils to retain,
Among the " Feejeeans," is "*crème de la
crème* ;"

Such very strange customs prevail in " Feejee,"
This curious island—'way out in the sea.

In this curious island, 'tis a fact for elation,
That the people are all of the "*Christian*" per-
suasion ;

That Sunday by Sunday, they service attend,
And on weekly prayer meetings without any end ;
In their silks and their satins, their laces and
bows,

Their lavender kids, and their grand furbelows.

Here, with gold-lettered prayer-books, are everywhere seen,
The modern disciples of the "*poor Nazarene*;"
As with lack lustre eyes, His story they read,
Who was born in a manger, and fasted and bled;
Whose home was the desert, and lowly His life,
"The Man known to sorrow, and acquainted with grief."
Here, with heads slowly nodding in drowsy condition,
They murmur young "Johnny's" unselfish petition—
"Save Johnny, and papa, and mamma, and—well
I'm sleepy, Good Lord, send all others to hell."
Here the priest ever mumbles, and mouths, and intones,
While the people respond with loud sighs and deep groans;
Then sallying forth from the church to the street,
They rehearse some new scandal to all that they meet;
On some neighbor's fair fame the quick changes are rung,
And the sweet morsels roll glibly over each tongue.
"Do you know, Mrs. B. has been seen to address
A note, all sealed up, to that old roué, S—?
Poor B., how I pity him—well, I am sure,
We should thank the good Lord, *we* at least are kept pure."

Such very strange customs prevail in "Feejee,"
This curious island—'way out in the sea.

If you chance to go courting a lady "Feejee,"
She will hug you, and kiss you, and sit on your
knee;

And e'en weightier favors should you happen to
choose,

Why, 'twere the height of bad manners of course to
refuse;

And yet, these same ladies are so modest withal,
They will blush at the name of a mere animal.

Thus, to mention "a mare," will their quick color
bring,

And "a stallion," *O, my!* 'Tis a horrible thing!
Thus, "a cock" is "*a rooster,*" "*a he*" "*a male
hen;*"

And to speak of "a boar" were the grossest of sin;
Female kine you may talk of, but mark me—I vow,
"A bull" is known here as "*a gentleman cow.*"

A male bird is "*a singer,*" "a ewe" is unknown,
And the mere name of "ram" would convert them
to stone;

"A leg is "*a stepper,*" "*a flyer,*" "a wing,"
While the generic name for them both is "*a
limb;*"

The "breast" of a fowl no "Feejeean" will eat,
She will take, if you please, just a little "*white
meat;*"

Though cleanly in habit, you are doomed unto
wrath,

If a lady there present you should mention "a
bath."

In crossing a roadway their skirts they will raise,
Till your eyes are bewildered 'with edgings and
lace ;

With ankles, with hose, with elastics, with—well,
To mention e'er one would consign you to h—ll.

All the senses but *one* may be keenly alive,
But *mind how you talk*, or at grief you'll arrive.

Such very strange customs prevail in "Feejee,"
This curious island—'way out in the sea.

In this curious island—'way out in the sea,
The fashions are set by some wealthy "Feejee,"
Then all the small minnows, with flipper and tail,
Follow fast in the wake of their leader, the whale ;
They copy his bearing, the cut of his clothes,
And even the manner of blowing his nose.
What he frowns on is wrong, what he smiles at is
right ;

If he said so, they'd swear that a raven was white ;
'Tis music most heavenly to hear his boots squeak,
And the hand that he shakes goes unwashed for a
week ;

While the fortunate mortal who receives such ad-
dress,
Boasts aloud ever after, of "*my friend, Mr. S—*."

The fashions once set, they remain in full force
Till the whale find it convenient to alter his course ;
Then the minnows, still swimming along by his
side,

Will extol the same act which they lately decried ;
For from anything sanctioned by the fashionable
whale,

No aspiring minnow will dare to turn tail ;
Independence of action is wholly unknown,
And no minnow so reckless as—" go it alone."
Thus, when Sunday is come, for *a drive* you may
go.

But, *to ride out on horseback*, "'tis decidedly
low ;"

At *the opera*, you may have a balcony chair,
At *the theatre*, never, as you value your hair ;
No fashionable minnow ever looks at a play,
Unless seated securely within "*the parquet*."
Such very strange customs prevail in " Feejee,"
This curious island—'way out in the sea.

In this curious island, when a funeral takes place,
The neighbors thereto will immediately race.
For among the " Feejeeans," a funeral, you know,
Is much the same thing as a circus or show.
Where inquisitive people go to gaze on the corse,
To ogle the mourners, and follow the hearse.
For the carriages, being all cushioned inside,
A funeral gives quite an enjoyable ride ;

And, the cavalcade started, the ones that are left,
Will examine the furniture, and condole the bereft ;
Each professional funeral follower knows
The exact value of furniture, carpets and clothes ;
And this estimate made, 'twill be stored by for use,
To retail the next day as most valuable news.
But while strangers, in crowds, to the cemetery
go,

The mourners, O, never ! “ *that were awfully low !* ”

Madame Grundy has stamped it both vulgar and
mean,

So no fashionable mourner at the grave may be
seen ;

But the lone ones feel comforted thinking—“ well
he

Had a far larger funeral than the late Mr. D.”

For among the “ Feejeeans ” 'tis a matter of boast,
The size of a funeral, its style and its cost :

And many poor minnows will spend all they have
In dispatching a friend scarce a mile to the grave ;
Then in secret they'll pinch to such painful extent,
That their *stomachs* will mourn, tho' their *hearts* be
content ;

Such very strange customs prevail in “ Feejee,”
This curious island—'way out in the sea.

THE END.

